Apparitions
Tulpas, Ghosts, Fairies,
and even Stranger Things
Malcolm Smith

APPARITIONS

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by

Malcolm Smith

Apparitions, tulpas, ghosts, fairies, and even stranger things

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CHAPTER 1

The Big Jigsaw Puzzle

Here's a question for you: what is the difference between a bigfoot, a flying saucer, and a ghost—assuming such things exist? You don't need to believe in any of them to answer the question. A bigfoot is (supposed to be) a flesh-and-blood animal which has somehow managed to avoid official recognition by science. A flying saucer is (allegedly) a nuts-and-bolts spaceship from another planet.

But a ghost is … what? A soul? A disembodied spirit? Aren't these just different words for the same thing, rather than explanations? The essential point about a ghost is that it has nothing solid behind it. Late nineteenth century psychical researchers adopted the term, "veridical (ie truthful) hallucination", which sounds weird to us, because we consider the essential point of an hallucination is that it is not real. Another term used was "apparition" ie the appearance of something, because it carried no philosophical baggage, whereas "ghost" implies we know what it is: the disembodied spirit of a dead person. (Likewise, "UFO" means simply "unidentified flying object", while "flying saucer" assumes we know it is an alien spacecraft.) The trouble is, as I dug deeper into the mystery, I discovered that apparitions cover a lot of items beyond those normally thought of as "ghosts". Therefore, for the point of view of this study, I shall adopt the following definition:

An *Apparition* is something which one sees, although further investigation would suggest it has no physical reality, *but* it nevertheless does appear to possess an objective reality ie it is not just an epiphenomenon of the mind.

But, of course, nothing is ever cut and dried when dealing with the paranormal. After recording things which clearly fall into this category, we come to items like the micro-ufonauts of Chapter 16, which might really be solid. Likewise, it would not do justice to a discussion of what are commonly labelled ghosts if we did not recognize that, in many cases, they are invisible, but produce sounds and smells, and sometimes movements of small objects, which imply that some intelligence lies at the back. However,

I am excluding poltergeists, which I am convinced are a different phenomenon, although sometimes they occur in the presence of apparitions.

Also, these encounters happen more or less by chance. Rightly or wrongly, I am excluding visions: sights, and often voices which have a deep mystical or religious significance to the experiencer. Typically, they occur when the subject is in a "trance," or altered state of consciousness, but can occasionally occur out of the blue.

Of course, the nature of apparitions leads to problems with evidence. After all, a bigfoot can leave big footprints, as well as hair and DNA traces, and it is always theoretically possible that someone, somewhere, will kill one or, better still, capture one, and so settle all disputes about its existence. Similarly, a flying saucer can leave marks on the ground when it lands, and it is theoretically possible that one will crash, and remove all doubts about their existence. Indeed, if you were to believe the rumours, this has already happened several times.

However, an apparition by definition has no body. No-one will ever pin a ghost to a dissecting board, or put a genie in a bottle. Thus, the only evidence we can rely on is the unsupported word of alleged witnesses—what sceptics describe as "anecdotal". By itself, this is not impossible to overcome. In court anecdotal evidence is called "eyewitness testimony", and the legal system has developed methods to sift it. Anecdotal evidence puts people in jail. Nevertheless, it does raise special problems for the investigator.

And different ones for the witness. Take, for example, the case of the "Mince Pie Martians" in chapter 17, which inspired one commentator on Reddit to make the glib statement that she was probably under the influence of hallucinatory drugs.

Think about it. He is suggesting that the woman went to all the trouble and expense to obtain these illegal and expensive drugs, and then confused the hallucinations with reality, and reported it to the police. Unlikely! Offer some mundane explanation if you wish, but this one can hardly be taken seriously.

I myself have been involved in the investigation of mystery animals, and have written about it.[1] One thing I have noticed is that the stranger the event, the more likely is the witness to request anonymity. Essentially, anybody who reports a really wild encounter will be met with the following accusations:

- you were drunk (or under the influence of drugs);
- you were seeing things;
- you are making it up ie lying.

Let us look briefly at each of these allegations. So many times, when reading of extraordinary sightings, I have noted how the witness insisted he hadn't been drinking. In point of fact, of course, you need to consume a tremendous amount of alcohol in order to see the traditional "pink elephants" of delirium tremens (DTs) and alcoholic hallucinosis, *or* the hallucinations which take place on withdrawal from alcohol. Drunkenness can, needless to say, cause a witness to misinterpret what he sees, but a person knows when he had been drunk, and is unlikely to report what he experienced under the influence. More likely, if he really did see something extraordinary, he would write it off as an effect of the alcohol, and never mention it.

As for "seeing things", visual hallucinations are very rare, even for the genuinely psychotic, who are much more likely to "hear voices". Some of you may have seen the 2002 movie, *A Beautiful Mind*, about the struggle Nobel Prize winner, Dr. John Nash had with schizophrenia, and remember his hallucinations about his roommate and his roommate's niece. It didn't happen; it was simply a way to portray his delusions on the screen. In point of fact, his imaginary companions existed only as voices in his head.

As for normal, healthy people, they do simply do not "see things" except under unusual circumstances. The influence of drugs is one. Another is prolonged sleep deprivation when, essentially, the mind's dream function momentarily breaks through. None of the cases recorded in this book belong to those categories. Rather than hallucinations, a much more reasonable explanation for some sightings is simply misidentification or misinterpretation of something mundane. We shall avoid that problem by restricting our investigations to sightings too unusual for such an explanation to apply.

As for lying, this is a wild card. People tell made up stories for all sorts of reasons, but mostly fun and profit. Sometimes they act irrationally; they might lie for no perceivable purpose, even when it is against their best interest to do so. There is a fine line between getting your fifteen minutes of fame, and making oneself a laughing stock, and not everyone sees it. I shall discuss this in full detail in Chapter 11, when we deal with apparitions of things which are definitely outside of cultural norms. For now, however, let

me just say that nobody is likely to win much kudos by making up a story about seeing a ghost.

The testimonies included in this volume are by people who would be taken seriously if they reported a more mundane event. They are not known to be of bad character, or to be practical jokers, or otherwise unreliable witnesses. The reports are not internally inconsistent, nor contradicted by other information. In other words, the only reason to disbelieve them is that they are fantastic.

However, if you keep your eyes and mind open, you will see that the fantastic, the miraculous, the paranormal, the simply inexplicable, not only happens, it is not even uncommon. We are presented with a Big Jigsaw Puzzle, for which most of the pieces are missing. How are we to approach it? Having a background in science (my degrees were in zoology), I have come up with three principles.

First: invoke Occam's razor. Don't rush to accept the observation at face value, but attempt to explain it by means of known laws. Only when it fails to meet the current scientific paradigm should we look elsewhere.

Second: wait for confirmation. Don't be in a hurry to invoke the paranormal on the basis of a single instance, even if it cannot be explained under the current paradigm. If a genuine paranormal phenomenon is present, there will be many instances. One sighting of a ghost might be written off, two or three suggest a pattern, a hundred represents strong evidence.

Third: don't discard anything. If a story sounds totally absurd or ridiculous, the temptation is to throw it into the waste paper basket of memory. But what if another, similar report arrives years later, from another source? The first one will have been forgotten; the second one will be discarded for the same reason. The evidence will not accumulate. You are throwing away pieces of the Big Jigsaw Puzzle. So keep everything. If the datum really is false, it will lie in your files and eventually die of loneliness. But if a genuine, albeit rare and unusual, phenomenon is present, its friends will slowly come in to keep it company.

Following these principles has led me down some strange and perplexing by-ways. There are things in this volume which I myself would not have believed ten or twenty years ago. But before I take you there, let me say a few words about the first principle.

Obviously, when all else fails, the fall back natural explanation is that the alleged witness is making it up, he is telling a lie. After all, he would have to be, wouldn't he? The story is impossible. And it is certain that hoaxes do occur. The trouble is, if you take that view, you end up cancelling every report one at a time. The evidence never accumulates. But there is something inherently fragile about a theory, such as the non-existence of something or other, which can only by defended by declaring every contrary item of evidence as a lie.

To understand this, imagine a scenario closer to normal life. What would be your attitude if you were told that your spouse was unfaithful, or your child was involved in criminal activities? You know your family better than anybody else. If you are sure they would never behave that way, then you would be right to demand a high level of evidence before accepting it. But if the evidence kept coming in, from independent sources, and you continue to insist this is all part of some mysterious conspiracy to defame your little darling, then you acting irrationally. You are in denial.

Similarly, no matter how fantastic an idea might be, after a certain point an investigator can no longer write it off. People who would appear to be excellent witnesses can sometimes fail to tell chalk from cheese. People of unimpeachable character, and who would have no reason to lie, occasionally tell outrageous falsehoods for no apparent reason. Any individual report may be false, but taken as a whole, the accumulated evidence may yet be strong.

So, feel free to doubt any of the stories you are about to read. But understand that they are merely a selection from a much larger set. One of Groucho Marx's famous quotes was: "There are my principles, and if you don't like them, I have others." Well, these are my anecdotes. If you don't like them, I have others—plenty of others.

Let us now lay them in order and see if they form a pattern. Let us examine the Big Jigsaw Puzzle.

PART I

PRELIMINARIES

CHAPTER 2

Products of the Mind

"I never used to believe in such-and-such until I saw …" is a constant refrain of those who encounter the paranormal. Seeing is believing, isn't it? But is the belief always correct? Your eyes can play tricks of you. There are such things as optical illusions. Your mind can also conspire with your eyes to play tricks. It may misidentify what the eyes see according to its expectations. And once you suspect you have seen something weird, your memory will focus on the weird aspects, and elaborate them every time it brings them to the surface, till what you remember seeing is quite different from what you really saw. But at least you saw something real. Or did you?

If several people see the same thing, the assumption is that it has an objective reality. Since every mind is independent, a collective hallucination is virtually a contradiction in terms. The closest thing to it would be group hypnosis: as in one of those performances in which members of the audience are hypnotised together and told to visualise a given scenario. Just the same, I dare say that it would work only at the overall level—that if you interviewed the subjects after the event, you would find that they saw what the hypnotist told them to see in general, but that the details would vary according to each individual's imagination.

Nevertheless, it appears there are times when an entire group can get themselves "psyched up" to have the same visual hallucination, provided it is simple, and this should be factored into any investigation of the alleged paranormal. Let's look at a few examples, starting with the simplest.

The Miraculous Icons

In order to avoid the pitfalls involved in investigating the paranormal, it is essential to understand all the psychological phenomena which may confuse the issue. For that reason, I always recommend what I consider the debunker's bible: *The Psychology of the Occult* by D. H. Rawcliffe, which has been republished several times under different titles. Here, then, is Dr. Rawcliffe's summary of the events which took place in a church at Limpias, close to Santander, Spain in 1919. They were originally investigated by

Prof. A. Encinas of Santander University, who then consulted with Prof. E. R. Janensch, a specialist in eidetic imagery.

> The hallucinations in question were remarkable for their limited variety. They were concerned almost entirely with pictures of saints. The saints had moved and carried out various actions, including stepping out of their panels. Their eyes also were observed to move and certain of the pictures appeared to drip blood. Naturally, when such reports spread, people for miles around flocked to the church where the "miracles" were taking place and stood gazing by the hour at the pictures. Jaensch writes that hundreds of sworn statements, including those of many educated and professional persons, bore witness to the reality of the hallucinations.
>
> The hallucinatory "epidemic" lasted for many days. In such cases the scenes inside the church are of interest. The audience gazes at the pictures and from time to time someone will point a finger and cry out that the eyes are moving or that a drop of blood has appeared and is running down the saint's face. Others look eagerly and add their own exclamations and confirmations; others fail to observe anything unusual[i].

Note the three cardinal features: mass excitement, simple hallucinations, and the objects visible to some but not others.

Fairies at the Bottom of the Garden

Thirty-three years after the event, Selwyn James described one of the most memorable experiences of his childhood[ii]. It took place in 1928, when he was aged seven and "already a veteran non-believer in Santa Claus, and suspicious of the well-meant nonsense adults use to ingratiate themselves with children." His older brother was a playmate of the offspring of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and so, one day, he tagged along to the Doyle residence. He met the famous author in a room filled with model soldiers in a magnificent diorama of the Battle of the Somme, and the "gentle-hearted man" explained to him all the details of the regiments. Then, as dusk fell, he took him out into the garden to see the fairies. Sensing the boy's scepticism, he told him that you must fervently believe in fairies and pixies.

Now, it should be mentioned that Doyle always claimed that he wished to be remembered, not so much as the creator of Sherlock Holmes, but as

the promoter of a new religion, Spiritualism. Regrettably, that obsession melted this otherwise intelligent man's critical faculties. He used to insist that stage magicians, such as the famous Houdini, who never claimed to be anything but illusionists, had occult powers. (Alfred Wallace, the co-founder with Darwin of the theory of evolution, suffered from the same mental block.) Eight years before, Doyle had been taken in by the Cottingley Fairies hoax, in which two children photographed cardboard cut-outs of fairies in a natural setting, and he even wrote a book about it entitled, *The Coming of the Fairies*. However, as far as I know, he never claimed to any grown-up that he had fairies at the bottom of his garden.

Be that as it may, Selwyn recalled that, at some point he believed, and he really did see the pixies and fairies as plainly as anything he had ever seen before or since. He always recalled it with delight, as the time he discovered the limitless quality of the human imagination. So here we have a visual hallucination induced in a susceptible child, perhaps in a manner analogous to hypnosis.

The Phantom Leopards

For a dozen years following World War II, Harry B. Wright alternated between his dental practice in Philadelphia, and travelling the world investigating the workings of witchdoctors in primitive societies. It was thus inevitable that his path would lead into the heart of darkness, to the centre of the complex religion of which Haitian voodoo is merely an anaemic offspring: Dahomey. Now the independent republic of Benin, it was then a French colony, and prior to that, an indigenous state as monstrous as the Aztec Empire, but less civilised, with a king commanding an army of fanatical women warriors and ruling a kingdom based on war, slavery, and widespread human sacrifice. (You think I am being sensational? Then you know little about the pre-colonial history of West Africa.)

Arriving in the old capital of Abomey, Wright made friends with a descendent of the former kings, Prince Aho, and an elderly guide called Ngambe. Having agreed to take him to a ritual in the "Convent of the Leopard", they led him through the museum of the royal family, including a chamber paved with human skulls, and to the nearby "convent": a collection of huts so cunningly concealed that, without the assistance of a guide, the stranger would pass within a few feet and fail to see them.

In a clearing by the entrance of the "convent", they came across a group of women in a deep trance, the faces of each concealed with a veil of cowrie shells. Ngambe frankly told him that the trance was effective because of their implicit belief that they were possessed by the spirits. This was the culmination of their three weeks' trance, during which it had been so deep they could not even perform normal bodily functions without assistance.

As the drums began to beat, the women were swept up into a frenzy, uttering loud, incoherent cries and throwing themselves into an unstructured, chaotic dance. Blind to their surroundings, they would bump into each other, fall over, then rise and continue. The compound was filling up with a surging mass of onlookers, and as the drumbeats dropped in tempo and sound, the fetish priests came out to present the chickens and goat which now replaced what had once been a human sacrifice. Prince Aho whispered to Mr Wright that he was about to witness the merging of humans and leopards. If any leopards appeared, it was imperative that he neither touch them, nor depart, as that would raise the anger of the leopards.

The chief priest now sung a low, dirge-like song, and as the pitch rose, a beautiful women moved into the clearing, stark naked except for a string of cowrie shells around her neck, and another around her waist. In a deep trance, "possessed", she began to dance gracefully to the quickening beat of the drums.

> She was tall and beautifully formed, with strong limbs and arms, wide shoulders and high, full breasts. Her ebony skin flowed in the flickering lights of the firebrands; and above and around her the tree bent over her in an unearthly majesty, so that she seemed to dance in a great ball of dim light. Suddenly she stopped and looked around. Then she called out some words in a low, musical voice. The drum beat was almost stilled, leaving only a faint reverberation in the air, and Aho tugged at my arm.
>
> "Look!" he exclaimed, in an ecstatic whisper. "Do you see the two leopards walking beside her?"
>
> The moon had risen over the trees, giving a milky glow to the darkness beyond the range of the firebrands. The girl was only a few paces away, yet I saw no leopards. The eyes of the natives, however, seemed to follow not only the girl but the space immediately around

her, as if there was something which they could see, but which was invisible to me. Aho kept pressing my arm.

"Do you see—there are five more leopards behind her!"

I did not know whether he was in earnest, or was carrying out a practical joke at my expense. But when Aho suddenly said, urgently, "Step back, or you will touch them!" I decided he was not joking. Whatever might be the physical truth of the matter, Prince Aho thought he saw leopards.

The chief fetish priest began to sing, louder than before; and the drum beat grew in volume and tempo. Suddenly I felt as if my eyes had started out of my head. Just beyond the girl, on the edge of the shifting light, I saw the shadow of an animal; and before I had time to express my wonder, a full grown leopard glided into view. It might have been my imagination; and if it was, I have more imagination than I thought I had. Two more leopards appeared behind the girl, stalking majestically across the clearing, and the three disappeared into the shadow of the trees. What was more astonishing than anything else—and in a way, nerve-shattering—was that I distinctly saw that one of the leopards had a chicken in its mouth.

"You saw them!" Aho exclaimed triumphantly, his pudgy face turned squarely towards me.[iii]

The prince spoke a few more words to him, and before he knew it, the ceremony was over, and the audience dispersing. Even so, when a woman bumped into a dancer, the latter shouted to keep her away, lest she tread on her leopards' tail, so presumably they were still visible to her.

Mr Wright said that, to that day, he did not know what he saw, but if it wasn't three leopards, it was a good facsimile of them. So, unless three real leopards sneaked in, summoned by the ceremony—and I would not rule it out completely—then he was inspired to have a visual hallucination as a result of the hypnotic effect of the ceremony. In any case, it is clear that the native audience and participants experienced a collective hallucination. I wonder just how the whole process started in the first place.

So now we have evidence that the excitement of crowds can induce susceptible people, and sometimes even sober, matter-of-fact people, to have an hallucination. But it is less well known that it is possible for an

individual to induce his own long lasting hallucination, and even be capable of sharing it.

In the popular mind, Tibet is the home of strange and exotic practices and knowledge. Practices indeed, but knowledge? Anyone interested in the paranormal must be prepared to understand abnormal psychology. Many experiences people imagine are paranormal are simply the manifestation of an altered state of consciousness. On the other hand, there is more than a little evidence that altered states of consciousness can precipitate paranormal phenomena, not always in the manner the practitioner expects. And nowhere does the issue come to a head more than when deliberate attempts are made to induce such altered states.

One person who visited Tibet several times in order to understand its secrets was Alexandra David-Néel (1868-1969), a convert to Buddhism (though not necessarily the Tibetan version), and the author of the 1929 classic, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, as the 1931 English translation is called[iv]. It is an eye-opener, to say the least, and should induce any thoughtful reader to give thanks for being born in a Christian society, where the meaning of life is not sought down such dark and convoluted paths, and through such grotesque superstitions and horrifying rituals. (I am not exaggerating; some of the practises the monks impose on themselves are truly terrible.)

In an environment where the whole physical world is believed to be ultimately an illusion, the need to separate fact from imagination is paramount. Fortunately, Madame David-Néel was one of those explorer-anthropologists who immerse themselves in their subject, yet attempt to maintain objectivity. She studied and practised the mental exercises of her subjects, but she made a clear distinction between what she heard and what she saw. She heard about levitation, but did not see it. (And the Dalai Lama has recently denied that it is practised.) She witnessed *tumo*, the art of raising the temperature of the extremities by mind power alone—a useful skill in such a cold climate—and learned how to do it herself, decades before it was scientifically established. (And, at this point, I might add that almost all these feats involve focusing the mind, and keeping out distractions. It occurred to me that this might be a better way to get to sleep than counting sheep. I haven't perfected it yet, but it seems to work.)

And she was taught about the *tulpa* ('tool-pa'): a mind-generated phantom, a made-to-order visual hallucination, a sort of walking, talking

figment of the imagination, produced either voluntarily or involuntarily. She therefore decided to try it herself. And, in order not to be influenced by the paintings and statues of the local deities, she chose to produce a tulpa of something she knew could be nothing but a figment of her imagination: a short, fat, jovial monk. It took a few months of mental concentration and ritual to create the hallucination, but after that, the monk's form became fixed. He became a permanent guest in her tent, and when they broke camp, he went with them.

Though I lived in the open, riding on horseback for miles each day, the illusion persisted. I saw the fat *trapa*, now and then it was not necessary for me to think of him to make him appear. The phantom performed various actions of the kind that are natural to travellers and that I had not commanded. For instance, he walked, stopped, looked around him.[v]

Gradually, the phantom monk changed, becoming leaner, mocking, and troublesome. She had lost control of the figment of her imagination, just as other people who deliberately call forth a secondary personality from their subconscious—say, by automatic writing or 'channeling'—eventually lose control of it. It required six months of hard struggle to kill off her mind creature.

Of course, all this is readily explicable as a dissociative personality phenomenon. Producing a visual hallucination in such a manner is rather unusual, but nobody familiar with abnormal psychology will be amazed. What is astonishing, however, is this: although the phantom was normally visible only to herself (of course!), once a herdsman who entered her tent to bring her some butter saw it, and mistook it for a live lama.

Not only that, but the whole reason she did the exercise in the first place is that she had seen other people's tulpas. On two occasions, a lama situated right in front of her, and witnessed by more than one person, vanished right in front of her eyes. On one of those occasion, it happened while she was speaking with him. It was said that the lama had sent his tulpa in place of himself. Another time, she was awaiting the return from leave of her servant, Wangdu, when she saw him in a dream, wearing a foreign sun hat he had never worn before. The next morning, both she and another servant watched him walk slowly up the slope, dressed exactly as in her dream, and then vanished in plain sight. Later that same day, Wangdu arrived in the flesh, dressed exactly as she had seen him, and it was

established beyond all doubt that he had been far away when, unknown to himself, his tulpa had appeared.

Finally, she was visited by a man who was a fervid worshipper and painter of the wrathful deities. (Why would a person worship a wrathful deity if there were a kindly one available?) And behind him, she saw the nebulous shape of one of those terrible beings. He took a few steps towards her.

> I noticed that the phantom did not follow him, and quickly thrusting my visitor aside, I walked to the apparition with one arm stretched in front of me. My hand reached the foggy form. I felt as if touching a soft object whose substance gave way under the slight push, and the vision vanished.
>
> The painter confessed in answer to my questions that he had been performing a *dubthab* rite during the last few weeks, calling on the deity whose form I had dimly perceived, and that very day he had worked the whole morning on a painting of the same deity. In fact, the Tibetan's thoughts were entirely concentrated on the deity whose help he wished to secure for a rather mischievous undertaking. He himself had not seen the phantom[vi].

So now we have the situation whereby intense mental concentration can, by itself, produce an apparition visible to others. And if Madame David-Néel had not had the foresight to induce a tulpa of something known to have no objective existence, one would be tempted to assume that the wrathful deity she observed really existed. As for the servant and the lama, well, who knows what we might think?

Telepathy

And since we are on the subject of Tibet and Madame David-Néel, we shall make what at first might appear a diversion, and discuss telepathy. Anyone who has made an in-depth study of ufology knows that many alien species, especially the greys and the Nordics, are strongly telepathic. However, until a few years ago I would have said that there was no credible evidence for it among human beings. That is probably still the case for mind reading, but not for thought transference.

What's the difference? Essentially, the same as between listening and speaking. Mind reading means eavesdropping on somebody else's thoughts: the power all police detectives and suspicious spouses wish they had, while

thought transference is the deliberative sending of a message by means of thought. Where the analogy breaks down, of course, is that listening and speaking use two separate organs, whereas mind reading and thought transference both use the brain, so it is possible that the two are connected.

That's assuming, of course, that they actually exist. Proving their existence in the laboratory would be, to say the least, rather difficult. In the film, *What Women Want* Mel Gibson convinced his female doctor that he could read women's minds by asking her to think of a number, and then telling her what it was. However, while that experiment might have convinced her, there was no objective evidence which a third party could grasp. After all, *we* can't read her mind to determine whether he was correct. With this in mind, what I am about to tell you are anecdotes, rather than scientific experiments. But I think they are good anecdotes.

Getting back to Madame David-Néel, in chapter 6 of her book she discussed messages sent "on the wind" ie telepathically. As you might expect, fundamental to its performance is the emptying of the mind of all thoughts and distractions and the intense concentration on the issue by both the sender and the recipient. In this way, pupils are alleged to be able to pick up some of the thoughts focused on them by their teacher. Madam David-Néel herself considered she had tuned in to some of the mental messages her own guru had sent her. More to the point, however, were the following experiences.

The first occurred when she and a Tibetan companion were travelling disguised as beggarly pilgrims, and happened to come across a lama, who promptly offered them food. Just then, one of the lama's horses took fright and ran away, requiring one of his disciples to go out to catch it. Meanwhile, noticing that the lama had apparently just eaten curds purchased from a nearby farm, David-Néel whispered to her companion that, as soon as the lama was gone, he should go to the farm and ask for a little curd. (You must understand that the food of an itinerant Tibetan is pretty monotonous.)

At that point, the lama overhead them, muttered an expression of compassion, and gazed fixedly on the assistant, who was in the process of returning with the fugitive horse. Abruptly, the man halted, looked around, tied up the horse, and walked to the farm. In a short while, he returned with a wooden pot full of curd. Instead of handing it to the lama, he gave him an

interrogative look, as if to say, “Was this what you wanted?”, and the lama told him to give it to his visitors.

For the second anecdote, you have to understand that Bönpo is the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, but its practices are still required in some Buddhist ceremonies. The following occurred in the eastern provinces which, even in those days, were under Chinese control. Six travellers joined her small party: five Chinese and a disciple of a Bönpo magician who was about to perform a ritual on a neighbouring hill. When Madam David-Néel expressed a desire to visit the magician, the disciple told her that his master could not be disturbed for the entire month of the ceremony. She therefore instructed her disciples not to let him depart unnoticed, as she intended to follow him. Unfortunately, he found out, and explained to her that, although he would not attempt to escape, it would do her no good, for he had already “sent a message on the wind.” Naturally, she considered his boasting rather dubious but, sure enough, after the Chinese had departed, along came a group of half a dozen riders to announce that they had come on orders from the magician to beg her to renounce her intention of visiting him.

She also heard talk of visual telepathy, but added that, considering the amount of fiction which often gets mixed up with fact in such tales, it was best to remain skeptical. Nevertheless, in view of the phenomenon of *tulpas*, it should not be ruled out altogether. A lama astrologer told her how, not long before, another lama, an old friend whom he hadn’t seen for several years, turned up while he was taking his meal, attended by a young pupil. They exchanged pleasantries, and he noticed that the pupil’s robe was badly torn at one end. Then the vision vanished. A few weeks later, the same young man appeared in person to say that his master wanted to be taught some astrological calculations. His robe bore the same tear.

Although this is a second hand account, I mention it because of what I am relate about completely different people a continent away.

Physically and culturally, it is a long way from Tibetan mystics to quite ordinary Europeans, particularly Britons, but the latter was the the subject of a classic two volume study by Edmund Gurney, Frederic Myers, and Frank Podmore entitled *Phantasms of the Living*, published in 1886, but now available on the internet. (Warning: it is not a page-turner, but more like a wade-through, and there are more than 1360 of those pages.) The vast majority of the two volumes is taken up with 702 cases of apparent spontaneous telepathy or clairvoyance. For each case, the researchers

sought to obtain evidence from all the participants. In other words, if A told B that he had had a dream, vision, or other impression that C had suffered an accident, and this proved later to be correct, the authors attempted to obtain signed statements from both B and C as well as A—and usually quoted their addresses as well as their names. If, as is often the case, the message concerned a death, it was confirmed from official records. The sheer volume of evidence should be sufficient to convince any reasonable person that the phenomenon exists. It is noteworthy that distance appears to be no barrier; psychic information about a death in America, South Africa, Australia, or New Zealand was often received in England at the very time of the victim's demise. It is also interesting to note how many of the percipients were members or family of the clergy. Nearly every one of the percipients claimed that they had not been thinking, let alone worrying, about the agent when the message was received, and that they had never experienced any other such "hallucinations".

However, I am more concerned here with a number of private, albeit not terribly scientific, experiments of attempts at active thought transfer, as described on pages 101—109.

The first was actually cited from the German *Archiv für den Thierischen Magnetismus* ("Archive of Animal Magnetism" ie hypnosis) of 1819, where Councillor H. M. Wesermann of Düsseldorf described how, on four occasions in 1808, he successfully managed to induce specific events into the dreams of unsuspecting friends at distances ranging from an eighth of a mile to three miles[vii]. On the fifth occasion, he sought to make a certain Lieutenant N., nine miles away, see in his dream a woman who had been dead for five years. The experiment was made at 11 pm but, unknown to him, Lieutenant N. was not asleep; he was wide awake, talking to a friend, S. about the French campaign. Just then, the door appeared to open, and the lady walked in, dressed in white, with a black kerchief. She waved to S., nodded to N., and departed. Both had seen her. Both immediately followed her, and called the sentinel, but she had disappeared. Some months later, S. informed the Councillor by letter that the door always used to creak, but failed to do so when the lady entered. Presumably therefore, the opening of the door was merely part of the vision. (I also presume that the lady appeared to close the door behind her, and the two men then opened it in actuality.)

The next case took place in England. The agent, whose name was not given, decided one night to appear to his friend, the Rev. W. Stainton Moses, without telling him beforehand. He concentrated and concentrated, and then went to sleep. The next morning he asked the Rev. Moses if anything had happened the previous night. Indeed it had. He had been entertaining a friend, and finally saw him out about half past twelve. He then sat back to finish his pipe when he suddenly saw his friend (the one trying to communicate with him) sitting in the chair the first friend had just vacated. A similar experiment succeeded a few weeks later. Unlike the case of Councillor Wesermann, the account was confirmed by a written statement from the Rev. Moses[viii].

Finally, we have the private experiments of Mr. S.H.B., who wrote the results in his diary shortly afterwards. Afterwards, the chief author of *Phantasms* managed to acquire signed statements from *all* the parties involved, and also cross examined the percipients[ix].

The setting was 22 Hogarth Rd, Kensington, London where the three Verity sisters lived. L., aged 25, and E., aged 11 slept in the front bedroom on the second floor, and the middle sister, A. in the adjoining room. At the time, Mr. S.H.B. was living about three miles away at 23 Kildare Gardens. About 1 a.m. on a Sunday evening (probably really early Monday) in November 1881, just before retiring to bed, he suddenly got the urge to try, with the whole force of his mind, to be in spirit in the front bedroom where the two sisters slept. He felt a tremendous influence flowing through his body, which he found difficult to describe.

Meanwhile, back at Hogarth Road, the eldest sister was still awake. All of a sudden, she saw Mr B. in the room, and screamed in terror. “There’s S.!” she cried, waking up her little sister. Both insisted they saw him, standing in a particular spot, wearing evening dress. (He himself could not remember what his clothes were at the time.) They called out to the third sister, who woke up and entered their room, where they told her of their experience. But it appears that the “phantasm” had vanished by then. It took a long time for them to regain their composure, and when they next met Mr. B. the following Thursday, L. volunteered the information without his asking anything.

They must have forgiven him their fright, because on the evening of Friday 1st December 1882, he decided to do it again. By now, the ladies were living at Kew, and he was at Southall. At 9.30 pm he fixed his mind

on the task, and appeared to go into a “mesmeric trance”, and was unable to move his limbs. After half an hour, he managed to force himself out of the trance, and wrote on a piece of paper:

“When I went to bed on this same night, I determined that I would be in the front bedroom of the above-mentioned house at 12 p.m., and remain there until I had made my spiritual presence perceptible to the inmates of that room.”

What he didn’t know was that the ladies’ married sister, Mrs. L.H. had been staying the night with them, and when he visited them the next evening, she volunteered that she had seen him twice the previous night. Here is her signed statement.

On Friday, December 1st, 1882, I was on a visit to my sister, 21, Clarence Road, Kew, and about 9.30 p.m. I was going to my bedroom to get some water from the bathroom, when I distinctly saw Mr. S.B., whom I had only seen once before, about two years ago, walk before me past the bathroom, towards the bedroom at the end of the landing. About 11 o’clock we retired for the night, and about 12 o’clock I was still awake, and the door opened and Mr. S.B. came into the room and walked round on the bedside, and there stood with one foot on the ground and the other knee resting on a chair. He then took my hair into his hand, after which he took my hand in his, and looked very intently into the palm. ‘Ah,’ I said (speaking to him), ‘you need not look at the lines, for I never had any trouble.’ I then awoke my sister; I was not nervous, but excited, and began to fear some serious illness would befall her, she being delicate at the time, but she is progressing more favourably now.

She seems to have taken it all very calmly. No doubt her sisters had informed her about the earlier visitation. The above statement also matched his own recollection of what she had told him. Upon hearing it, he handed her the afore-mentioned piece of paper to prove that he had planned it beforehand. What is interesting to note is that he himself had no memory of this ghostly visitation. He tried the same experiment again at midnight of 22 March 1884, when the girls were living at 44 Norland Square, and again L. Verity was awake when she saw him enter and stroke her hair.

I haven’t heard of any other experiments of this nature—at least none which have proved successful. Nevertheless, with all this evidence, what are we to make of the many cases documented in the book, where people have seen a friend or relative, often a long way away, appear to them at the

hour of death? Were the dying person's thoughts suddenly projected to the loved one, and if so, how did he gain the psychic power to do so when, logically, all his faculties were closing down? Or was it his ghost? Indeed, can any real distinction be made between the two explanations? Perhaps a ghost is really a psychic projection from a now discarnate mind.

There is one other question to be raised: what are we to make of the case when the apparition is of a *living* person?

CHAPTER 3

Apparitions of the Living

Yesterday, upon the stair,
I met a man who wasn't there.
Antigonish, by Hughes Mearns (1899)

You go to the city centre, or to the shopping complex, and you see hundreds of anonymous strangers passing by. You assume they are normal, flesh-and-blood people going about their normal, flesh-and-blood activities, just like you. Indeed, it would be a very strange world if it were not so. But it *is* a very strange world. So how do you know that every last one of those anonymous strangers is really, physically present?

In this chapter we shall initially to return to the 1886 publication of the Society for Psychical Research entitled, *Phantasms of the Living* because, towards the end of volume 1, after several hundred pages of detailed, if somewhat tedious, documentation of apparitions occurring near the time of death, we come to some accounts which are even weirder.

England, 1873

Let's take the experience of John Rouse of Croydon, England. In 1883 he explained how, during 1873, he used to attend spiritualist séances in a private house, and one of the other attendees was a Mrs W. However, on one occasion when a séance was due, he was in Norwich on business, and since it was a bright, moonlit night, he decided to go for a walk. Soon, he noticed a woman coming down the middle of the road. Assuming she was a local woman, who might be afraid to meet a stranger under such circumstances, he moved to the side of the road. So did she. As they approached each other, he saw that she was a well-dressed woman in an evening gown, without a bonnet or shawl. He could see the rings on her fingers, the flowers in her hair, and gold bracelets on her arms, and could hear the rustle of her dress. If he changed position, she also moved in order to be in a direct line to him. Then he could see it was Mrs. W, whom he assumed had also turned up unexpectedly in Norwich. When they were

separated by only five feet, she held out her hand to him, and her lips moved as if she were about to speak. He was just about to take her hand, when the iron hurdles of the wire fence next to them rang out as if struck by a metal object. Startled, he spun around. When he turned back, she was gone.

It was her ghost! he thought, and immediately went back to his room and wrote a letter to a mutual friend enquiring about her. The lady herself must have been amused when he showed it to her, because—and she confirmed this herself in writing to the editors of the book—at 11 pm on the night in question, dressed in the same outfit in which he saw her, she was at the séance. Then, although she was not herself the medium, she suddenly fell into a trance for the first time in her life. She remembered nothing of what happened during that period[x].

This is the sort of experience which many unsophisticated uncivilised people, and quite a lot of civilised people who think themselves sophisticated, would explain by saying her soul had left her body. But once you pause to think about it, the explanation is meaningless. For a start, what is the soul? More importantly, how would you see it? After all, we see a person's body because it reflects the ambient light, after the molecules of the body have transformed it into their own wave lengths of colour. How do we see a person's soul—or "astral body", whatever that is? It is simpler just to say that, somehow, under the trance conditions, her mind produced some sort of psychic projection—which is not saying much. The book's editor commented that it would not be strange for an hallucinatory object to move so as to continue in the direct line of vision of the percipient. Nevertheless, I note that it apparently acted intelligently towards him, by reaching out her hand.

Philadelphia

Now, let me quote an account by a Presbyterian minister, F. R. Harbaugh of New Jersey, USA.

> While a resident of the city of Philadelphia, I made an appointment to meet a personal friend. At the appointed hour I was at the designated place. My friend was tardy in his appearing. After a while, however, I saw him approaching (or thought I did). So assured was I of his advance that I advanced to meet him, when presently he disappeared entirely.

> The locality where I thought I saw his approach was open, and unobstructed by any object behind which he could have disappeared. Only by leaping a high brick wall (an enclosure of a burying-ground) could he have secreted himself. The hallucination was complete—so distinct as to lead me to advance to meet him without a thought of optical illusion.
>
> I immediately went to the office of my friend, and there learned from him that he had not been away from his desk for several hours[xi]. [p516]

The Rev. Harbaugh added in later correspondence that, when he entered the office, his friend apologized and claimed he had forgotten the appointment. We therefore cannot say that he had been "there in spirit" all along. Had his friend's subconscious conscience produced a psychic manifestation? Or perhaps the Rev. Harbaugh's eagerness to meet him induced an hallucination, or even a tulpa. More to the point, *how often does this happen*? (And can you use this as an excuse if your spouse or boss hears you've been sighted somewhere where you were not supposed to be?) In a more frequent setting, perhaps it does explain the one in six bereaved people who claim to have seen their late departed.

The dancing partner, 1871

Mr. W.A.S. had never had a visual hallucination, but from the very start he never doubted that what he saw that April day in 1871 was anything but an apparition. It was about 2 p.m., and the sun was streaming in, when he noticed coming through the partly opened door opposite what he initially thought was dirty soapy water. He was about to get up and scold the housemaid, when he saw it was the train of a woman's dress. He immediately realised that it was an apparition, and he decided to watch it carefully. The lady glided in backwards, as if she were on a movable slide, without any disturbance to her pale blue evening dress. Her head was slightly turned over her shoulder, and her eyes also turned, so they appeared to be fixed on him. Only the tips of her nose, lips, and chin were hidden by the edge of the door. Instantly, he recognized her as a woman—and old friend, not a sweetheart—with whom he used to dance 25 years or so ago. He had since lost contact with her for 20 or more years, but she still bore the same long curls and bright eyes, although "perhaps something stouter and more matronly."

His niece, in the same room, failed to see her, but he assured himself it was not a trick of the light. The lines of the figure and its colours were quite distinct from the background. Then his brother entered, passing straight through the figure, which rapidly faded, first the colours, and then the form.

As he explained in his letter of January 1883, he often used to tell the story in society, and would add, in effect, that it couldn't have been a ghost, because she was still alive. Then one day, the lady of the house said, "She is not alive as you suppose, but she has been dead some years."

What? They looked it up in the peerage, and found she had died in 1871. Further investigations revealed that her death occurred in November of that year i.e. seven months *after* he saw her apparition. But before that, he asked how she had died.

"Poor thing, indeed," was the reply, "she died a wretched death; she died of cancer in the face."

Then he recalled that the front of her face had always been hidden by the edge of the door[xii].

Louisiana, 1856

In 1856 Dr Charles M. Smith of Franklin, Louisiana was going out to a visit a patient in the country, when along came a buggy owned by a Mr. Weeks. Both the buggy and the horses possessed certain peculiarities which made them easily distinguishable from all the others in the parish. And there was Mr. Weeks himself in the carriage, and next to him a woman whom he would have sworn was his sister, Mrs. P, except that the doctor knew she had perished in a hurricane two months before. Dr Smith bowed and called Mr. Weeks by name, but was totally ignored. Once he had returned home an hour later, he made enquiries and discovered that no-one remotely resembling those people had been seen in the village, and it later transpired that Mr. Weeks had been at home 30 miles [50 km] away at the time. "The conclusion seemed inevitable," he added, "that whole affair was an optical delusion."[xiii]

Or it could have been something even stranger? On the other hand, there is just the possibility that, despite all the evidence against it, that it was a case of mistaken identity.

What can we make of all this? Otherwise reliable people occasionally make up stories for no apparent reason. People who would be expected to be excellent witnesses occasionally make appallingly obvious errors of

observation. A single case, in other words, no matter how believable, can always be written off. But when they start to accumulate, you start to wonder what's going on. It needs also to be pointed out that visual hallucinations are very rare (so far as we know!). As explained before, healthy people practically never have them, except under special circumstances, such as the influence of drugs or lack of sleep.

Similar encounters have been documented by other researchers. Before there was a Society for Psychical Research, there was Catherine Crowe. This remarkable woman, resisting the scientific dogma that all ghost stories were the result of some sort of mental aberration, collected a large corpus of evidence of a wide variety of paranormal encounters in a volume entitled, *The Night-Side of Nature*. It makes interesting reading, not least of all for the psychological terminology used at the time. Thus, hypnosis is called "magnetism", and trance states "somnambulism". She also had broad access to the German literature, and was responsible for introducing the words, *poltergeist* and *doppelgänger* into English. Regrettable, she didn't always clearly document her sources, so I shall only cite her cases when it is reasonably clear that they are based on first hand reports.

Like this one.

The Uncle's Visit, 1792

Mr. H. was described as "an artist, and a man of science". It was presumably many decades after the event that he wrote to Mrs. Crowe, but he was able to give the exact date: 12 March 1792. He had been reading about some mathematical problems in the *Philosophical Transactions* (which gives you an idea of what sort of man he was), when he decided to go to bed, because he was fatigued, although not sleepy. It was a bright moonlit night, and he had extinguished his candle, and was sitting on the bed removing his clothes, when suddenly his half-uncle, R. Robertson appeared in front of him. At the same time, he clearly heard the words, "Twice will be sufficient!", whose meaning was obscure. His half-uncle's face was so close and clear that he could even see the pock-marks, but it was his garment which was most amazing. It seemed a dingy sort of twilled sackcloth, covering his entire body, with a neck band close to the chin, and neither hands nor feet visible.

No doubt, in the intervening years, some aspects of his memory had been lost or transmuted, but the general drift is likely to be correct. The

following day, he made enquiries, upon which his grandfather told him that the clothing he had seen resembled the strait jacket in which his half-uncle had been previously confined. Later, it transpired that, on the night in question, he had again been strapped into a strait jacket, following a suicide attempt. Fortunately, it appears Mr. Robertson recovered, and joined the British expedition to Egypt in 1801.[xiv]

This sounds like a case of a well-known phenomenon, Crisis ESP, so we will require another short digression. It is ironic that, in studying extra-sensory perception (ESP), psychic researchers have spent a great deal of effort trying to see whether people can guess the identity of cards being turned up, a skill which, to the best of my knowledge, no-one has actually claimed. However, one of the most common ESP claims is something quite different, and impossible to experiment with: that at times of crisis—of danger to themselves or someone close to them—people, often with no prior paranormal experience, suddenly receive a flash concerning the threat.

A typical example would be that of a woman I heard interviewed on television some years ago. She had been about to cross the street, when she suddenly experienced an overwhelming sense of danger. She drew back, turned aside—and a car suddenly hurtled by. If she had been on the street, she would have become road kill. A sceptic explained it as a combination of coincidence and selective memory ie we remember an unusual coincidence, and forget all the times our hunches or premonitions turned out false. At first glance this sounds reasonable, but does it really apply? We are expected to believe that she often gets premonitions of danger as she is about to cross, and often turns back, but all the other times have been forgotten? That doesn't sound likely. The human brain is wired to notice anomalies and incongruities. Also, as the boy who cried wolf discovered, one can respond only so often to false alarms before they cease to alarm. If I had been in the habit of receiving such false premonitions, I am sure that, the day my number came up, I would have said to myself, "Oh, what the heck! You're always having these bad feelings, and they never amount to anything." I would have been road kill.

Explanations become even more difficult when the premonition is externalised as some somatic sensation. London experienced its heaviest air raid on the night of 10/11 May 1941. In the wee hours of the morning, ambulance officer, William Harrison went out to pay a duty call on a sick driver, when suddenly "someone" grabbed him by the shoulder. Spinning

around, he saw there was nobody there, so he immediately turned to go back to the depot. A few minutes later, two anti-aircraft shells sliced into the pavement outside the driver's home—just when he would have been there.[xv]

At other times, the premonition may take the form of a disembodied voice. For example, there was the experience which a Welsh miner told to the Rev. Henry Garland:

> The author was a guest of a miner named Paxton when conducting some evangelistic services in the heart of the Rhondda valley. This man had a wife and family or six children. At that time the wages were very low; men were mostly on piece work and had to toil hard to get a living wage. On one occasion Paxton was at work on a narrow seam of coal which meant he had to work lying on his side. After working hard for two hours a voice said "Take a rest." This is a saying in the pits among the men, when they think one of their number is working too hard. He answered: "Get on with your own job, mate. I cannot afford to waste time."
>
> About a quarter of an hour later, the same appeal was made. Again he replied: "I cannot take it easy, I have a wife and family to keep." Half an hour later, again the voice called: "Bill, take a rest." He thought he would do so, having been hard at it for so long. Walking some distance from the working he found a suitable spot where he could sit down and meditate. The thought suddenly came to him that he was some hundred yards away from any other man at work whose voice he could hear. As he was trying to solve the problem he heard a rumble. He ran for his life, the pit caved in and buried his tools for ever.
>
> Had he not moved he would have been either instantly killed or buried alive[xvi].

Such experiences are by no means unique. If I had the space, I could easily cite other cases of The Voice warning of danger.[xvii]

Nor is crisis ESP limited to danger affecting the experiencer; it may also warn of a crisis to someone close to him. Take, for instance, Steve "the Crocodile Hunter" Irwin, who ran Australia Zoo, and was killed by a stingray in 2006. Six years before that, he was working on a backhoe at the zoo when he was hit by a feeling of crisis so hard it knocked him off the vehicle. Without knowing what it was, he got on his utility truck and started

driving in a certain direction, he didn't know why. Just then, he received a mobile phone call telling him his mother had just been killed in a motor vehicle accident, and where, and he realised he was already driving in the right direction.[xviii]

I have no idea how this process works, but doesn't this sound similar to Mr. H's vision of his half-uncle? Of course, in all these cases, we are left wondering, who is the chief focus of the phenomenon? In other words, did Steve Irwin's mind somehow "see" his mother's death, or did his mother's mind somehow send a message to Steve as she died? The fact that crisis ESP often involves just one person, would suggest the former. In support of that, I shall cite my own personal experience.

Late one night in 1983, I let our little silky terrier out to enjoy himself in the front yard. Unfortunately, the latch on the front gate was unstable, and had not closed properly. The little blighter bolted out on to what was normally a quiet suburban street—just in time for a car to appear out of nowhere and kill him instantly. To lose a pet so abruptly is bad enough; it is worse when you know you will have to explain it to your mother, who was on a camping tour on the other side of the country. Eight days later, she turned up grim-faced at the door, and her first words were: "Where's the dog?" It transpired that, a week before, she had woken up from a disturbed dream—not necessarily about dogs—and announced to her sister and tent-mate: "Something's happened to the dog!" The conviction remained for the rest of the holiday. My aunt confirmed the story. The only question was whether it happened on the evening of the accident, or the following one.

I come from a most un-psychic family. (I feel left out.) This, as far as I know, was the only premonition my mother ever had. But the important point is that, based on the vast difference in their respective brain power, the premonition is far more likely to have originated in my mother's brain than in the dog's.

The "Living Ghost"

This is a more recent example from Vivienne Rae-Ellis' extensive compendium of case histories. It is, strictly speaking, second hand, but it sounds reliable. Henry Franklin told her that his friend, David Lloyd Davies had achieved fame in his circle by being the only "living ghost" they had even met.[xix]

It was some time before the Second World War, and he was staying as a guest of an earl in a castle near Tenby in west Wales. On that particular day, he was forced to cross a river while hunting with the hounds. He slipped, got caught in the branches of a sunken tree, and was forced to extricate himself while being completely submerged. On his return to the castle, the butler informed him that he had replied on his behalf to a telegram from his mother, asking if he was all right.

When next he met his mother, she told him how, on the afternoon in question, she had been resting upstairs when David appeared dripping wet, and told her, "I have come from the depths." Doesn't this sound like a case of Crisis ESP, similar to that of Mr. H. and his uncle?

I might add that Mrs. Rae-Ellis recorded only one other apparition of the living. They are nowhere near as common as apparitions of the dead—which is probably a good thing for our peace of mind.

A Journey Out of the Body

Don Checketts waited 39 years to tell this story.[xx] He was a 19-year-old Marine stationed in Managua, Nicaragua in 1929, and homesick for his family in Ogden, Utah. On 2 December a letter arrived from his mother describing her heartache at their separation during the Christmas season. Feeling depressed about it all, he went to bed that night, slept a short while, then woke up with a sense of urgency. To his amazement, as he got out of bed, he saw his own body still lying on the cot. Still beset with a sense of urgency, he (in spirit) went outside, and raised his arms.

Next thing, he was being swept at tremendous speed over the vast countryside until, next thing he knew, he was in Utah. Although he had never seen his parents' new home in Ogden, he somehow knew it was the white house on hill. Passing through the undisturbed snow, he knocked on the door. One is bound to wonder if his memory was completely accurate after a lapse of 39 years; did his knocking really make a noise? In any case, his mother opened the door and appeared in her nightdress. He told her he could stay only a few minutes. After a farewell hug and kiss, he walked back down the hill, looking back once to see his mother waving from the doorway. The next thing he knew, he was being swept back at incredible speed to his tent in Nicaragua.

The following morning, he awoke to find his pillow wet with tears. He told his tentmate about his adventure, and after Christmas he received a

letter from his mother dated 3 December ie the morning after the event, confirming the experience.

Told like this, the story sounds utterly fantastic, but immediately I read it, I remembered something similar, only this time it was a near death experience, or NDE. And here we must make another digression because everything is interrelated when it comes to the paranormal. For nearly half a century—ever since the publication of Dr. Raymond Moody's 1975 book, *Life After Life* - it has been recognized that a great many people who have come close to death, particularly those who were "clinically dead" and required resuscitation, have experiences which can be interpreted as a visit to the afterlife. Since then, the literature on the subject has been voluminous, and numerous attempts have been made to provide a naturalistic explanation.[xxi]

A handful of NDEs are distressing, even hellish, but the vast majority follow a similar pattern. The events typically occur in the same sequence, and if any are missing, it is usually the later ones, if the experiencer has not been "out" long enough. Firstly, the patient has an out-of-body experience (OBE) ie he finds himself outside his body, usually looking down on it, and watching the medical procedures, which he can typically describe afterwards. He may move outside, and even see other spirits roaming the streets. In the second phase, he is swept at great speed down a dark tunnel. He may find himself in a paradisal landscape. In any case, if the clinically dead patient is "out" long enough, he will meet a Being of Light, who radiates an overwhelming love. Although the Being does not identify himself, the witness normally assumes it is God, in whatever way he understands Him. What the Being of Light does is give the witness a life review ie his whole life is displayed before him in maximum detail, and his every action judged according to what extent he exhibited love (a criterion which will surprise no-one familiar with the New Testament). Interestingly, this life review appears to take place in a condition of timelessness; the witness does not return feeling he has lived his 30, 40, or 50 years over again.

What are we to make of all this? At the onset, it must be said that *both* the supernatural and the natural explanations are counter-intuitive. Many people, of course, reject a supernatural explanation because their world view is wholly materialistic, and they don't (want to) believe in God or life after death. However, these matters should be regarded as open questions;

you shouldn't reject an hypothesis because it doesn't fit your philosophy. No, the trouble with the supernatural explanation is more fundamental. Our memory is a function of the brain. Stimulation of the brain under certain conditions can elicit specific memories. Damage to the brain can be shown to erase memories or prevent new ones. So, if the soul passes to another world while brain function is flat-lining, how can the witness remember it? How could the experience be encoded on the brain?

On the other hand, all natural explanations are also counter-intuitive, because they imply that, just when all biological functions are closing down, and brain activity is close to zero, a person will experience the most stupendous hallucinations of his life, because those who have had an NDE invariably describe it as "more real than real". Neurologists will be able to describe pathological conditions under which some of the early features of an NDE are present, but it still begs the question as to why they should occur in a specific sequence. Also, I have never, ever seen any sceptic posit any biological analogue to the life review. Also, it is noted that the features of NDEs—which also occur to children—do not contain cultural elements such as pearly gates, winged angels, or devils with horns. Furthermore, one thing we do know about hallucinations is that they are infinitely variable and idiosyncratic. When large numbers of people from different societies undergo experiences which are variations on the same theme, and are not culturally conditioned, the null hypothesis is that they represent an objective reality.

What has this all got to do with the issue? Essentially, because Don Checketts described an OBE similar to that of near death experiences. Some of them, as I mentioned, saw other spirits in the street. But the most dramatic experience of the kind was that of Dr. George Ritchie, whose lecture on the subject inspired Dr. Moody to begin his research on NDEs. Indeed, Moody dedicated his book to Ritchie, but made no further reference to him, probably because he knew that the publication of Ritchie's own story was in the pipeline.[xxii]

In December 1943, twenty year old George Ritchie found himself in a military hospital near Abilene, Texas with double pneumonia, when he was supposed to be going to Richmond, Virginia to continue his medical studies. He didn't know until later that he had been declared dead, but was later revived by a shot of adrenaline. In the interval, he woke up in the ward and, determined to go to Richmond. Much to his surprise, a ward assistant with a

tray not only didn't see him, but walked right through him. Ritchie somehow went through an outside door, then found himself 500 feet above the ground, and heading across country at tremendous speed. Seeing a huge river, a bridge, a neon sign, and a large city, he decided he ought to come down and ask the direction to Richmond. Nobody could see him. Suspecting he might be dead, or at least, out of his body, he thought he ought to return to his hospital, a journey which happened as quickly as the outward one, and he at once found himself standing in front of his inert body. "Oh God," he mentally cried, "where are You when I am so lost and discouraged?" At that very moment, the Being of Light appeared, gave him his life review, and took him around to see many other lost souls wandering the earth. One is bound to wonder whether he would not have become one of them if he had not prayed.

One could go into a his experiences in very great detail. For example, he later happened to pass through Vicksburg, on the Mississippi, and recognized the bridge and the neon sign he had seen during his NDE. So here we have a long distance, cross-country out of the body journey similar to that of Don Checketts. Makes you think, doesn't it?

Doppelgängers

Up to now the apparitions of the living which we have encountered could be explained as somehow a manifestation of a person's mind. But the one living person you would never expect to meet is, surely, *yourself*! Yet the fact is, meeting one's own double is a rare, but nevertheless well established phenomenon. In English folklore it is called a *fetch, waff*, or *co-walker*, and in German a *doppelgänger* or "double walker", all of which imply it is some sort of spirit, while in psychiatry it is known as an *autoscopic hallucination*, which carries the assumption that it is a mental aberration. It is true that it can occur under some pathological circumstances, but when it happens to a healthy person in everyday life, one is bound to wonder.

Strictly speaking, the German word refers to the double of anybody, not just of the witness. Catherine Crowe, who introduced the term into English, cited numerous instances, of which I shall quote one, since it appears to have been well attested.

Professor Stilling relates that he heard from the son of a Madame M- , that his mother, having sent her maid up stairs on a errand, the woman came

running down in a great fright, saying that her mistress was sitting above, in her armchair, looking precisely as she had left her below. The lady went up stairs, and saw herself as described by the woman, very shortly after which she died.[xxiii]

Nor is this phenomenon a thing of the past. Take, for example, the experience of Englishman Adrian Brown of Winton, Dorset in 1990. He didn't volunteer the story. A journalist heard a rumour and sought him out four years later. In 1990 he worked for a security firm, and every night he drove around various sites on a strict timetable. But this time, he was delayed by 20 minutes. On a roundabout, in the headlights of a truck, he saw a white van identical to his own, marked with the same black lettering. That couldn't be; the only other van owned by his company was broken down and off the road. As they approached, the driver of the other van turned to face him, and he saw it was himself! "I cannot describe the uneasy feeling in that split second we looked at each other," he explained to the journalist. "It was an emotion that started in the pit of my stomach that I have never experienced before."[xxiv]

Later, he realised his double had been in the exact spot he would have been in, and had been for the previous five months, if he hadn't been late. So was this some sort of time anomaly?

PART II

THE UNDEAD

CHAPTER 4

On the Threshold of Death

We don't know how lucky we are. These days, if anyone dies in youth or middle age, we ask ourselves: What went wrong? But all through human history until a few generations ago, the reverse was the case; anybody who lived to a ripe old age was known to have beaten the odds. You won't need to read much Victorian literature before you come to the death of a child, because life was precarious, and never more precarious than for the young.

In 1879, one woman provided a collection of allegedly true ghost stories, some of them apparently based on the experiences of her friends. I do not know her source for the following tale, but it concerns a Mrs. G., and her two daughters, Ada, 9 and Minnie, 8, who were staying in the country with her sister-in-law. When she (Mrs. G.) obtained a house in London, she sent the two girls along with their nurse on an early train, while she took a later one. That evening, their older cousin, who had seen them off, was surprised to see one of the little girls walk into the room. "I am come to say good-bye, Walter" she said. "I shall never see you again." Then she kissed him and vanished.

No, the girl was not dead, but within a couple of hours of their arrival in London, they both came down with small-pox, and lingered several days before passing away.[xxv] Assuming the story is accurate, was this a case of an OBE or clairvoyance? Or, to put it another way, was Walter visited by his cousin's soul or her mind? Indeed, can we made any real distinction between the two, considering that some mental transference must be present to allow the apparition to be seen?

Interestingly, it is also recorded that Minnie died first. The day after the burial, their mother was sitting vigil over Ada's death bed, when the child exclaimed: "Oh, look, Mamma! Look at the beautiful angels!", pointing to the foot of the bed. Her mother could see nothing, but she did hear soft, sweet music. Ada then exclaimed, "Oh, dear Mamma, there is Minnie! She has come for me!" At that moment, Mrs. G. distinctly heard a voice say, "Come, dear Ada, I am waiting for you," upon which the child smiled, and quietly passed away.

As death approaches, the curtains between the worlds part, allowing glimpses which we who are still on this side find uncanny. Thus the account by Mrs. Winifred Taylor, which has a better provenance than the first one in this chapter. She was only a baby in Islington, London in 1913 when she contracted measles, while her sister, Frieda was suffering from pneumonia. Their mother was the chief care giver, but at one point one of the aunts offered to look after the children, and suggested she take a break and go for a walk.

According to the story Mrs. Taylor's mother told the family throughout the whole of her childhood, as she was walking along Liverpool Road, she saw a funeral procession approaching. The horses were decorated with black plumes, as was the custom in those days, and she noticed every other detail. Just then, the procession vanished before her eyes, and she was convinced the funeral was for Frieda who, in fact, soon died.[xxvi]

This was related as a ghost encounter, but a moment's reflection will reveal that it couldn't be. Quite apart from the philosophical question of whether horses have souls, and can become ghosts, the fact is that all the horses and their drivers must have died separately in both time and space. Are we to assume that they all reassembled to make the procession? It is more likely this represented some sort of time slip, or psychic newsreel played back, and that the mother's preoccupation with death opened her mind and enabled her to see it.

The dying see things which are invisible to the living. A nurse told how she had been called to the hallway, where a woman had passed away while being transferred. According to the technician, they had been carrying on a conversation when the lady looked up, and said: "Oh, here comes God. I think I'll go with Him", and immediately expired.[xxvii]

Minnie's appearance to Ada, mentioned earlier, is far from unique. It is well established that many of the dying claim to see, and to converse with, loved ones who have predeceased them. Delusions? Hallucinations? If so, why do they follow this pattern? It would appear to be a field of study which has been sadly neglected, although many other less common aberrations have attracted investigators.

Take, for example, the experience related to Ian Wilson by a woman called Janet who, he explained, had been completely unaware of any other examples. She and her family had "absolutely no special religious or psychic inclinations."[xxviii] However, in 1968 she gave birth to a baby girl,

whom she and her husband named Jane, after Janet's paternal grandmother, Jane Charles, aged 96, who was herself dying. Unfortunately, the baby girl died just two days after being born.

Meanwhile, 100 miles away, Janet's father, Geoffrey Charles was holding vigil over Jane Senior's deathbed. So when he heard of Jane Junior's death, he chose not to trouble his mother with the news. It came as a shock, therefore, when, with all appearances of lucidity, she started telling him of people she could see around her, invisible to his eyes. She spoke first about a woman he did not know, and then announced she was seeing her husband, John, who died in 1942. Then, a look of puzzlement came over her face as she noted that John had a baby with him. Suddenly, she declared: "It is one of our family! It's Janet's baby! Poor Janet. Never mind, she will get over it." A few minutes later she was dead.

Sir William Barrett (1844—1925), a scientist who helped found the Societies for Psychical Research in both the UK and the US, was deeply interested in the subject, and his last book, *Death-Bed Visions* was published incomplete the year after his death. It is also important to note that all the case histories detailed in it were fully referenced.

Most notable was the case of Doris B., who died in January 1924 of heart failure shortly after giving birth, because not only was Barrett's own wife present at the death, and wrote about it shortly afterwards, but he obtained written statements from two other witnesses: the matron of the ward, and the patient's mother.[xxix]

Her older, invalid sister, Vida had already passed away just 18 days before—on Christmas Day, in fact—but because of Doris' severe illness, the family kept the information from her. Her mother went into detail about how they took off mourning dress before visiting her, and her husband vetted all the letters coming in, lest any outsider drop a reference to her sister's death.

Doris was already dying when her premature baby was brought to her. She held on to Lady Barrett's hand and pleaded with her not to leave. Everything was getting darker and darker, she said. Her husband and mother were called for. Then, to quote Lady Barrett:

> Suddenly she looked eagerly towards one part of the room, a radiant smile illuminating her whole countenance. "Oh, lovely, lovely," she said. I asked, "What is lovely?" "What I *see*," she replied, in lower, intense tones. "What do you see?" "Lovely brightness—wonderful

beings." It is difficult to describe the sense of reality conveyed by her intense absorption in the vision.

Then—seeming to focus her attention more intently on one place for a moment—she exclaimed, almost with a kind of joyous cry, "Why, it's Father! Oh, he's so glad I'm coming; he *is* so glad. It would be perfect if only W. (her husband) would come too."

She wondered if she should stay for the baby, but then announced that, if they could see what she saw, they'd know why she couldn't stay. She asked her husband not to let the baby go to anyone who wouldn't love him, then pushed him to one side, and said, "Let me see the lovely brightness." Lady Barrett left, but her place was taken by the matron, and Doris lingered another hour. But in that hour, according to both her mother and the matron, while speaking to her unseen father, a look of puzzlement came over her face, and she announced that Vida was with him.

Doesn't it seem strange that, as her vital processes were failing, and she felt the darkness closing in, everything changed, and she suddenly had a vision of surpassing brightness and beauty? Also, like Jane Charles 44 years later, she saw, not only a deceased relative, but one whose death was unknown to her. Note, too, that her father and sister appeared in glory. In other words, these were no miserable earthbound spirits pathetically haunting their previous haunts.

Later in the volume, he provides a lengthy, and moving, account of the death of a ten year old child, Daisy Dryden, only the merest summary of which can be given here.[xxx] This was in California in 1864, and it is again important to remember the appallingly high infant mortality rate in the Bad Old Days. Scarlet fever had taken the life of her six year old brother, Allie just seven months before. According to her mother, "in no way was she more remarkable than many other children." That summer she was attacked by "bilious fever", which lasted five weeks, and for the next two weeks it looked like she would recover. Then one afternoon, an expression of amazement and pleasure came over her. "It is a spirit,' she said. "It is Jesus. And He says I am going to be one of His little lambs."

That night she came down with enteritis, and survived only another four days. For the first twenty-four hours she was in great pain, but for the final three days, although her body was frail and attenuated, his mind was clear and active. And she seemed to be existing simultaneously in both this world and the next.

“Well, Daisy, you will soon be over the ‘dark river’,” said her Sunday School Superintendent as he was about to go. What a thing to tell a dying child! She asked her father what he had meant, and then replied:

“It is all a mistake; there is no river; there is no curtain; there is not even a line which separates this life from the other life.” And she stretched out her little hands from the bed, and with a gesture said, “It is here, and it is there; I know it is so, for I can see them there at the same time.”

But it was quite different from what she had been told, and she could not be led by any adult suggestions. There were no “many mansions” ie houses, and no glorious city, nor did the angels have wings. But the flowers and the trees were more beautiful than anything she could imagine or describe. She didn’t see the angels all the time, but when she did, the walls seemed to disappear, and she could see an immense distance, and an immense throng. Sometimes she heard angelic singing.

And she saw people who had gone before. She told her Sunday School teacher, Mrs. H., “Your two children are here.” They had died years ago as children, and would have been grown up by then. Daisy had never heard speak of them, nor seen any pictures (this was 1864, remember), but she recognized them, although they were now adults in the other world. When informed that H.’s daughter, Mary had been injured in a fall, and was unable to straighten up, Daisy explained that she was now all right.

And she was constantly being visited by her brother, Allie, and conversing with him mentally. Imagination? They asked her whether Allie was wearing clothes, and received the reply:

“Oh, no, not clothes as we wear. There seems to be about him a white, beautiful something, so fine and thin and glistening, and oh, so white, and yet there is not a fold, or a sign of a thread on it, so it cannot be cloth. But it makes him look so lovely.”

Then her father quoted the Psalmist, “He is clothed with light as a garment.”[2]

On her last day, she asked to be taken to the window, where she said good-bye to the sky, the trees, the roses, and the beautiful world in general, but added that, although she loved it, she did not wish to stay. At evening, when the clock said 8.30, she told them Allie would come for her at half past eleven. At a quarter past eleven she asked her father to take her up, for Allie had come. Then, at 11.30, she raised both hands, said, “Come, Allie,” and breathed her last.

The experience clearly made an impression on Daisy's parents. It inspired her father to learn Hebrew and Greek, and then to write a book on the resurrection of the dead[xxxi]. My problem, however, is that it is unclear how much time elapsed between the event and its commitment to writing. Nevertheless, it is not unique. More recent examples are available.

Paediatrician Dr. Melvin Morse recalled one of his patients, an eleven year boy he calls John, who was dying of lymphoma. Three days before his death, when his loved ones were gathered around, he suddenly sat upright and announced that Jesus was in the room. About 3 a.m. he sat up again and shouted about the beautiful colours in the sky. An hour later, much to everyone's surprise, a woman, unknown to his parents but the mother of one of John's friends, arrived and told how she had been awakened by a vivid dream about John and an overpowering impulse to visit him. About dawn, when his breathing was extremely laboured, he asked his parents to let him go. "I've seen God, angels, and shepherds," he said. "I see the white horse."(?!) They should not grieve for him, for everything was beautiful and wonderful. Soon after that, he fell asleep and didn't wake up[xxxii].

An interesting factor is this case was that John has been given very little painkilling drugs, because they interfered with his breathing. Dr. Morse suspects we would hear more such stories these days if the dying were not so heavily sedated.

The case of "Mike" was even closer to that of Daisy.[xxxiii] Fourteen years old, and suffering from the genetic disease, cystic fibrosis, he had chosen to die at home. Again, he received little in the way of sedation. However, his parents became concerned that he was suffering from "horrible hallucinations", and because Dr. Morse had made studies on the near death experiences of children, he was asked to make a home visit. After a two hour consultation with Mike's parents, he spent two hours discussing the "hallucinations" with the patient, and it became clear that Mike's attitude to them was quite different.

In fact, the "hallucinations" were beautiful pre-death visions. His problem was that he was confused by them, and had difficulty telling vision from reality. They would come when he was awake, and he would find himself surrounded by a bright light, a great throng of people, another land, and in the presence of God. He also bashfully revealed that, in the "other world" he could have an erection, which the ravages of the diseases prevented in this world. After Dr. Morse helped him develop cues to help

him distinguish the vision from (earthly) reality, he became calmer, and his last six days were spent essentially alternating between this life and the next, as the visions became ever more frequent and intense.

Nor is this phenomenon unique to Western society. In Japan it is known as *omukae*. In 2014 a questionnaire was sent out to a large number of bereaved relatives of Japanese citizens who had died of cancer. As it turned out, *omukae* took place in a fifth of the cases. Of these, 87 percent involved visions of visitors, and 54 percent of afterlife scenes.[xxxiv]

But we are digressing. The subject of this book is apparitions. Nevertheless, it is important to note that, in the case of death bed visions, there is a tie-in between visions of heaven, and of deceased loved ones. The fact that the patient may not have been aware that the visitant was deceased suggests that the visions are objective. But have any attendants of the dying seen them as well?

A woman called Joy Snell, whose vocation was the nursing of the terminally ill, claimed that she frequently witnessed the visitants, often even before her patient did. I am bothered with such a claim. Although it is theoretically possible for a person to be "sensitive" to such things, there is always the problem of confirmation. How do we know that the sensitive is not (a) delusional, (b) highly imaginative, or (c) lying? I prefer the testimony of more regular people who have the occasional unusual experience. Nevertheless, her 1918 book, *The Ministry of Angels* has been republished, if anyone is interested.

But with respect to more regular people, here is a report from Massachusetts in 1890. Nurse Mary Wilson, 45 had been called in to attend a dying widow, Caroline Rodgers, 72. They had never met before, and she knew nothing of Mrs. Rodgers' family history, although her patient talked about her late second husband and children, and her wish to see them again. On the evening prior to her death, the only occupants of the house were the patient, Mrs. Wilson, the latter's 25-year old daughter, and a boy of ten or twelve to be called for in emergencies. The layout of the rooms, and the way they were locked, were such that it would have been impossible for anyone to enter without Mrs. Wilson seeing him.

Nevertheless, about two or three in the morning of that last day, while everyone else, including the patient, was asleep, Mrs. Wilson was seated on a settee, with the lamp burning continuously, when she saw a man standing near the door of the chamber where the boy was sleeping. She turned her

head briefly to call to her daughter, who was sleeping on a couch nearby, but when she turned back, the man had disappeared. There was nowhere he could have gone. Imagination? A lucid dream? However, she was able to provide a complete description of the apparition, but the following day the patient's niece was able to identify him as Mr. Tisdale, the *first* husband of Mrs. Rodgers, who had died 35 years before, in another town, ten years before his widow had remarried. The niece was the only person in the neighbourhood who had known him, and there was no picture of him anywhere[xxxv].

Here is a more recent case, as reported by Mrs. E. Christine Jones, about the time she was doing night duty as a nurse in a London hospital. She was talking to the staff nurse when they both heard a man's footsteps coming up the stone stairs, and they saw a man in a chauffeur's uniform, who said, in a flat voice, "I have come for my wife." After they had directed him to the women's ward, off he went. Then the night sister arrived, late, explaining that she had been attending to a dying patient who had been brought in that morning unconscious. The police were trying to locate her husband. At that point, the chauffeur was mentioned, and it turned out he had not visited the women's ward at all. In fact, the lift man, standing in full view of the stairs, assured them he had seen *nobody* in uniform.

Next morning, Christine was called to the matron's office, where she was told that the police had located the dead woman's husband. He had been a chauffeur, and when he had set off for work the previous morning, his wife was apparently quite well. Nevertheless, when a friend called for her, she found her unconscious, and summoned an ambulance. Meanwhile, it turned out her husband had been killed in a motor vehicle accident six hours before his wife also died.[xxxvi] (I wonder what *she* died of.)

Of course, you may have noticed that these incidents are not really similar to the previous ones. The deceased relatives were seen by the attendants, not the dying patients themselves, who were unconscious. These were not death bed visions, but apparently ghostly visitors—a fact which may or may not be connected to the earlier phenomenon.

More telling was an incident reported by one of Dr. Morse's colleagues. A couple were caring for the wife's grandmother, who was in her eighties, at home. Naturally, they discouraged their nine year old daughter from visiting the sick room but, nevertheless, one day she was

drawn to it, only to come out with a puzzled expression. There were two grannies inside, she told her mother. First she was talking to her (great)grandmother, and then a "lighted lady" called Beth came and talked to both of them. Then they left together. Of course, when mother and daughter re-entered the room, the old lady was dead. The deceased's own mother's name had been Beth, but the little girl couldn't possibly have known that.[xxxvii]

A "lighted lady": does that sound familiar? And when you were nine years old, did you know the first name of your great-great grandmother?

Finally, although I stated that I did not intend to include visions in the definition of apparitions, I'm inclined to think the following two accounts are connected with the above phenomena. When H. J. Garland was preparing a book on the hymn, *Abide With Me*, he received, and published, many accounts of its effects on ordinary people. After relating a number of death bed visions, he includes these two reports, both from Englishwomen. [xxxviii]

The first was from a woman who was the child of a second marriage.

When I was 17 years of age my mother was afflicted with a painful illness and was obliged to keep to her bed for six months, I being her only nurse. Towards the end, my step-sister, a trained nurse, came to help. She was an agnostic, and in her presence my mother and I could not pray together or read from the Bible. The night my mother passed away I suddenly saw the Saviour appear at her bedside, bearing the marks of His suffering on the cross. My step-sister suddenly began singing the verse, 'Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes.' As we sang the verse together my mother passed away. The Saviour was so near that I could have touched Him.

It is unclear whether her step-sister also saw Him. The second letter was from a woman whose eldest sister was staying with her and her son, and because she was ill she used to sit in a chair by the bedside. She used to have a recording of the hymn—I believe the tune, not the words—played several times a day, and always the last thing at night.

One morning I saw the Christ standing beside her chair. He looked so loving and kind and I rushed forward to worship at His feet, but when He saw me about to kneel He smiled and vanished. The following morning I saw Him again, and my sister, less than half an hour afterwards, went into His eternal presence.

The witnesses do not appear to have been at prayer or meditation, or in any sort of altered state of consciousness. So make of it what you wish.

CHAPTER 5

The Universal Testimony of Mankind

The date was 20 January, 1975, and I was boarding temporarily with a group of young fellow-Christians in a house in Epping, Sydney. The youngest of these was a 17-year-old girl called Tracey, who had recently joined the group in order to get her life back together after a couple of years of wild abandonment, which had left her with alcoholic gastritis. Tracey was a memorable character in more ways than one. She told us about her recent employment as a cartoonist for Hanna Barbera in Australia, assisting in creating a cartoon of two fat kids for an ad for Kentucky Fried Chicken (now KFC), and an ad for the short-lived product, Uncle Sam's underarm deodorant. (I'm not making this up.) She liked snakes, and claimed that she had once had a number of pet snakes roaming free in her home. She had first milked them of venom, and then broken the tips off their fangs so that the venom would never accumulate, but merely leak out one tiny drop at a time, which was of no danger. (I'm not making this up, either.) But Tracey liked all poisonous creatures, and the last I saw of her, she was recovering from the bite of a spider she had tried to befriend.

In any case, on the night in question, a group of us were gathered around a table, and the conversation moved from the recent movie, *The Exorcist*, to ghosts in general. At that point, Tracey announced she had seen the "Green Girl" ghost, which she heard was about to be the subject of some TV documentary. I asked her to tell the story. When she did, it was in a manner which vividly caught the atmosphere of fear that had been present. I had no doubt whatsoever of her sincerity, and I was so impressed I wrote down the details before my memory had a chance to fade.

The events had taken place the previous year. She and her friend, Liz had gone to visit her Uncle Charlie, who was 89 years old. Over the dinner table, he told them a story of his youth: about how, in that house, an Aboriginal fellow had murdered his girlfriend, called Green (and buried her?), and then committed suicide. He had hanged himself in such a position as to be hidden from view when the door was opened, with the result that Charlie, who regularly visited the place, did not discover the

body for three days. This being in the country, when he finally did so, he buried it before going to the police. After that, the ghost began appearing regularly in that room.

This, of course, is just the sort of thing you need to tell a couple of impressionable teenage girls before putting them to bed in that very room. Uncle Charlie, with the wisdom and nonchalance of age, told them that ghost was quite harmless, so they shouldn't be scared if they saw it. He then went out to sleep on the verandah, leaving the girls lying together in bed. The door was shut, but the windows let in the moonlight, and their eyes became accustomed to the dark. There were trees outside, but Tracey was adamant that they were not so thick that any light shining through them could have caused the effects about to be described. Anyhow, it could not have been a lighting effect, even had the trees been dense.

The tone of Tracey's voice as she told the story clearly revealed the "spooky" feeling which came over her and Liz as they wondered whether this was the room where the girl had been murdered. They then went outside, woke up Uncle Charlie, and asked him.Yes, he affirmed: that was the room, but there was nothing to worry about.

Not surprisingly, the young ladies did not share his calm, philosophical view. Going back to the room, they turned on the transistor radio full blast, then pulled the blankets over their heads and cowered. From this you will gather:

1. The girls were a couple of impressionable, imaginative teenagers; and
2. There can be no doubt that they were well and truly awake when the phenomenon commenced.

Firstly, the transistor radio went off. It did not gradually die down; it audibly *clicked* off. Tracey pulled back the blankets and groped for the radio with her hand, confirming that it was definitely turned off. Now they were really scared. In the room appeared a shape like a pale shoulder, with the head pressed sideways against the other shoulder, the arm of which was outstretched laterally. There was a definite hand. However, the face bore no features except for two dark spots not quite the right shape, or in the right position, to be eyes. Below the shoulders, it "melted away" into thin air.

At first Tracey referred to it as a "light shadow" but, on being questioned, she said that it was definitely three dimensional, moving in front of the walls, not upon them, nor did it change shape as it passed over an object, as a lighting effect would. It was transparent. For half an hour (surely a gross overestimation) it moved around the room, sometimes up and down, but never approaching the human occupants. Sometimes it would turn right around, but then its arm would swing away from them, never towards them.

One can just imagine how they felt at the time. Incredibly, they did spend the following night in the same room, and witnessed the same phenomenon. During the day, she said, poltergeist activity—the throwing of objects around the room—took place.

I suppose you could say that there was no actual proof it was a discarnate human spirit. After all, it didn't really possess a human shape. Nevertheless, you hear stories like this all the time. Samuel Johnson is famously said to have given as the reason for his belief in ghosts, "the universal testimony of mankind." On the face of it, this carries weight. After all, if you wanted to make a case for the existence of vampires, you would ultimately have to explain why these animated, blood-sucking corpses are apparently restricted to the Balkans. But reports of ghosts can be found everywhere. Nor are they even uncommon. I have noticed that if you raise the issue in a group of any size—say a dozen or two—you are likely to find someone who has had the experience, or at least knows someone who has.

There are statistics which bear this out. In 1894 the Society for Psychical Research published its *Census of Hallucinations*. They called them hallucinations, but they were looking for ghosts. To 17,000 people—8,372 men and 8,628 women—they asked the question:

Have you ever, when believing yourself completely awake, had a vivid impression of seeing, or being touched by a living being or inanimate object, or of hearing a voice, which impression, so far as you could describe, was not due to any external physical cause?

2,272 people said, "Yes". But the editors were not uncritical. They weeded out a large number which they did not consider answered their criteria, and reduced the figure to 1,684, or 9.9 per cent.[xxxix] Every public opinion poll taken since that date in multiple Western nations has produced results of a similar order of magnitude. Thus, a Pew research study in 2009

discovered that 18 per cent of Americans claimed to have seen or been in contact with a ghost, up from 9 per cent in the Gallup polls of 1990 and 1996.[xl] When someone asked the question on Quora, "Has anyone had an encounter with a ghost in real life?" more than a hundred readers gave their stories.[xli] The Castle of Spirits, which is a website which allows readers to describe their own encounters with ghosts, claims to have over 4,500 stories.[xlii] (I haven't counted them.)

Where would you think would be the best place to see a ghost? A house of the dying! In 2000 a member posted on the "All Nurses" forum the question: "What is your best nursing ghost story?" As far as I can determine, there was no response for the first five years, but then the stories started coming in, so that by 2020 it stood at more than 2,600 stories and comments over 145 internet pages.[xliii]

Under such circumstances, where did the orthodoxy, "There are no such things as ghosts" come from? Did somebody, perhaps during the Age of Reason, examine a major sample of the best and most cogent ghost sightings, and demonstrate that all of them had mundane explanations? If so, time has not been kind to him; his name and work have been lost to posterity. You will not find them referred to in any sceptical article. No! What really happened is it was decided, about the same time, that ghosts did not fit into the developing scientific materialist framework, and therefore they *could not* exist—and so, any alleged sighting must have a mundane explanation.

This is not to say, of course, that we should accept every story at face value. I remember watching a daytime television show in which a group of residences explained how their housing block was haunted. But as they continued, I started asking myself: "Where is the ghost?" It seemed to me that they had all latched onto a few slightly unusual experiences, and then let their collective imagination run wild. Indeed, a lot of the stories in the Castle of Spirits suffer from the same defect.

A lot, but not all. A lot appear quite genuine, and inexplicable. (And, as we shall see later on, some of them are even stranger than ghosts.) Ultimately, it doesn't matter whether one in ten people encounter a ghost, or one in a hundred, or one in a thousand; if any are genuine, then we are are faced with something new to science.

With this in mind, let us examine a few more pieces of the Big Jigsaw Puzzle.

CHAPTER 6

Ghostly Encounters

This small selection of a very large sample is chosen for its diversity. All the cases involve one-off encounters with a ghost, a ghost being defined pragmatically as the sort of thing traditionally called a ghost, which is traditionally, and plausibly, interpreted as the disembodied spirit of someone deceased. Whether this is a reasonable interpretation will be discussed in a later chapter.

A Walk to the Place of Dread

In my opinion, one of the best travel books ever written was *A Pattern of Islands* (1952) by Sir Arthur Grimble, who gave a fascinating account of his experiences as a District Officer in the Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati) in the years, 1913 to 1920. Sir Arthur called himself a freethinker. If so, he felt himself free to think about things outside the purview of most people with that self-designation, because in part 3 of chapter 7 he told the story of his encounter with The Limping Man of Makin-Meang.

Visitors to Cape Rēinga in New Zealand can be shown the Spirit Tree down which Māori souls were alleged to slide into the miserable Māori underworld, known as Po, or “night”. A somewhat similar legend was (is) attached to the northernmost tip of the northernmost island of the Gilbert archipelago.

> The story went that, when anyone died, his shade must first travel up the line of islands to Makin-Meang. Going ashore there on a southern beach, it must tread the length of the land to a sand spit at the northern tip called the Place of Dread. This was not an actual place-name, but simply a term of fearful reference to the locality—for there sat Nakaa, the Watcher at the Gate, waiting to strangle all dead folk in his terrible net. The ghost had no hope of winning through to paradise except by way of the Gate, and no skill or cunning of its own could save it from the Net. Only the anxious family rituals, done over its dead body could avail for that; and even these might fail if any outsider were to break in upon their course.

One might very well wonder how this idea originated, seeing that it does not appear to relate to any objective external reality, and its sole function appears to be to make death even more terrifying than it normally is. Some people might quote it as an example of the dark bondage under which the Prince of Darkness holds his subjects. Be that as it may, when Arthur Grimble came to Makin-Meang, he found an atmosphere of dread hanging over it like a thick pall. No-one would talk about Nakaa, but everyone knew that ghosts swarmed the island, and anyone who met one would join him within the year. However, an outsider explained to the white man that the local ghosts always travelled by the eastern route to the Place of Dread, while those from the other islands took the western beach. Therefore, if you walked along the western beach, *but never looked back*, then returned via the eastern one, having first ascertained that nobody was due to die that day, you could visit the Place of Dread—if you were really determined to do so.

Grimble was really determined.

"Do not go to that place," said the Native Magistrate, his face dark with dread.

Why not?

It was perilous.

Grimble reminded him that he (the magistrate) belonged to a church, and wasn't supposed to believe that rubbish.

> He lifted his eyes to mine, crossing himself. "Not Christian souls," he whispered, "but pagan ones … to Hell … they still walk the island … and Nakaa stays there … and there is fear …" His voice trailed off into mumbles; I got no more out of him.

Of course, it was a small island; Grimble knew he could quite easily find his own way there. But as he was feeling bloody-minded, he demanded that the magistrate find him a policeman to guide him there *right away*.

The policeman told him that, as a first time visitor, he must bring a seed coconut—a big one, carried upright in his cupped hands with his elbows pressed against his ribs. As the journey along the western beach—never looking back—was five or six miles in length, I presume it lasted about two hours—quite a period to lug a coconut under the hot tropical sun. Having planted the coconut in the grove of Nakaa, he gazed out over the unexceptional promontory of coral rock and pounding surf. It was nothing to look at, but it suddenly occurred to him that "from somewhere down the

chain of islands, the thoughts of dying folk might be winging their way in wistfulness and fear to the spot where I was standing." Perhaps that thought put him in the right frame of mind for what followed.

This was long before the days of bottled water. He was thirsty, but was unable to climb 40 feet to get a coconut, and the policeman was certainly too scared to violate Nakaa's trees. So they glumly ate their bully beef and biscuit, and some time after 2 o'clock set off back down the eastern route, the policeman bringing up the rear 40 paces behind.

Thirst bore down upon him, and after about ten minutes, he peevishly decided to ask the first person he met to climb a tree and bring him down a nut. And while he was in the midst of this thought, a man appeared around the curve of the beach—a man so distinct that, even 40 years later, Grimble could see him still in his mind's eye. He was stocky and grizzled, aged about 50, with a fine ceremonial mat belted around his waist, a scar from temple to jaw on his left side, and a twisted left foot and ankle which forced him to walk with a strong limp.

Despite the normally infallible courtesy of the islanders, the man ignored Grimble's greeting. Staring straight ahead, he limped past as if the latter were invisible. Then it occurred to him that the man might be mentally deranged. "Ask that chief to stop," he called back to his companion, "he may need some help from us." But his voice was lost in the noise of the surf, and the two islanders passed as if each were invisible to the other.

"Who is that man?" he asked the constable, pointing into the distance. He asked again. Suddenly, the truth dawned on the policeman. Great beads of sweat rose on his forehead. His face collapsed. He screamed like a woman that he was afraid of that place, and bolted like a rabbit down the beach. Not until Grimble had trudged back to the village did he see him again, this time pouring out his soul to the Native Magistrate.

Grimble immediately poured out his own petulant story—of how the constable had deserted his post, and went into a full description of the "lunatic" at large on the path of the dead.

"That was indeed Na Biria," said the magistrate. No, he was not a lunatic. And no, they could not bring him forward. He had just died, at about three o'clock. The mourners were even now performing the rituals for his meeting with Nakaa.

And so the freethinker was left to think: had he picked up Na Biria's dying thoughts, projected onto the pathway he fully expected his soul must follow?

And we might ask a similar question: is this not further evidence that apparitions are psychic projections, originating perhaps in a disembodied mind, which can be picked up by minds which, for one reason or another, are psychically in tune with them?

This story might be considered typical of ghostly encounters. You will notice four points:

1. The ghost could be identified as a specific deceased person.
2. It was acting more or less intelligently—in this case, walking to its destination.
3. It was visible to one person, but not another.
4. It was clothed.

Of these four characteristics, the first is comparatively rare, except where the person is newly deceased. After all, the number of the dead is almost infinite, and the vast majority will be strangers to the witness. Indeed, from what you have read in Chapter 3, you cannot even guarantee that they are dead, although some give themselves away by wearing period costume.

But you will come across the other three again and again. It is number 4 which is practically universal—except in cases where the "ghost" does not materialise fully, but appears as a shadow, or some vague form such as the one Tracey saw. But I know of no case of a naked ghost. Perhaps they only occurred among societies which regularly went naked, such as the traditional Kavirondo, and the Australian Aborigines.

The Major's Last Rendezvous

This was told to Catherine Crowe by one of the five witnesses.[xliv] In 1785 they were British army cadets posted to India, and ordered to leave Madras and join their regiments up-country, under the command of Major R. Since much of the journey was by barge, when they came to a particularly meandering section of the river, the major suggested that, to relieve the monotony, they make a hunting expedition overland, meeting up with the barge at a pre-arranged point.

All went well until they arrived at a swamp. The major then pulled on a pair of heavy top-boots which, along with a limp, made him distinguishable from everybody else at a distance. Unfortunately, after a failed attempt to jump a ditch, he found his gun choked with wet sand. Not to worry! He told the cadets to carry on without him while he cleaned the gun, and he would catch up later. The trouble was, he didn't, even though they shouted and fired their own weapons to alert him.

At last, after seven or eight hours, they were approaching the barge, when they saw him heading for the rendezvous point ahead of them, limping along in his top-boots, but without his hat and gun. He did not appear to observe them, but arrived at the boat first. They saw him cross the gangplank and hurry down the companion stairs. But when they got there themselves, he was nowhere to be found, and the boatman declared that no-one had come aboard until they had arrived. Baffled, they retraced their steps to the place where they had left him. To cut a long story short, his gun and hat were lying nearby, but he himself was found dead at the bottom of a nearby sunken well, which had been overladen with branches. He must have lost his life shortly after the cadets had left him. But he had kept his rendezvous.

You will note that this event was very similar to the one in the Gilbert Islands more than a century later, except that the ghost was visible to everybody except the boatman.

The Return of the Invalid

In this case. Mrs. Crowe knew the family involved, presumably in England. A young man, JS had been sent abroad because of his ill health. It is important to note that, due to his long confinement in the house, his shoes were extremely dry, and always produced a loud creaking sound throughout the house. One night, an old servant was sitting, half-asleep in an armchair, when she was so startled by the sound of his distinctive footsteps ascending the stairs, that she quite forgot that he was supposed to be abroad. Holding a candle to light his way, she followed the creaking steps all the way to his bedchamber, where they ceased. There was no-one there. She therefore informed her mistress, who noted the date, and it turned out that, on that day, he had passed away in Lisbon.[xlv]

The Return of the Pilot

Here is a bizarre story told by Edward A. Stott, who served in the R.A.F. in North Africa during World War II. As such, he was with a formation of twelve Hurricane fighters from 33 Squadron called "A" flight, which set out on a dawn patrol over El Alamein. They met no enemy fighters, but half way back to base it was noticed that a new pilot, Sgt. Leicester was lagging behind. They called out to him twice to catch up. Suddenly, to their horror, they saw two enemy fighters swoop down on him, and he was shot down in flames.

Back at base, when they headed to the mess tent for a late breakfast, they met members of "B" flight, to whom they reported the sad loss of Sgt. Leicester. But it couldn't be, they were told; Sgt. Leicester had had breakfast with them half an hour before. Several officers who had been present confirmed it.[xlvi]

It looks like the dead pilot got back faster than the aircraft of his own squadron. But the story is second hand ie Mr. Stott received it from the members of "B" flight, albeit under circumstances where it might be considered reliable. So it would have been useful to have heard more details about what Sgt. Leicester did in the mess tent, and how long he was there. Did they actually see him put food into his mouth—which would appear to be a difficult thing for a ghost? I wish people would ask such questions.

The Spirit Departs

This probably happened in the 1980s, because Vivienne Rae-Ellis said that it took place "several years ago", and her book, *True Ghost Stories of Our Own Time* was published in 1990, but it is the sort of thing which would stick in one's memory for a lifetime. Her informant, Angela Moody was working one night in a hospital in Surrey, England. About 1 a.m. a 68-year-old lady died, and they laid her flat, planning to return later to lay out the body properly. Unfortunately, she and the staff nurse, Janice were unable to come back for another two hours. They washed the body and wrapped it in a shroud, and while Janice was at the foot of the bed, attaching the name tag, Angela was working at the head. She turned, and saw something she thought only happened in cartoons: Janice's hair was standing on end, and she was pointing. About a metre above the bed, a transparent smoky haze was rising, changing into a mass with every second. After perhaps ten seconds, it had taken on the shape of the woman's body.

At one accord, they bolted, getting caught in the door as they attempted to pass through together.[xlvii]

Something can be relatively common, but remain socially invisible if people do not talk about it. This might be one of those things. First of all, I should introduce Michael Swords, who will make further appearances later in this volume. While his day job was being a professor of natural sciences, his extra-curriculum activities involved him as one of America's leading ufologists. So when he retired, he commenced a blog, mostly on ufology, but also on various other anomalies which came his way.

Thus, his post of 17 December 2012 was on "the mist at death"[xlviii], in which he quoted three first hand accounts of people witnessing a white mist rising from a person's body at the moment of death. In the most dramatic encounter, the mist was preceded by the arrival of apparently angelic visitants announcing that they had come to take the patient home. What I felt was really uncanny was that, over the next few years, thirteen people added comments to the post describing similar experiences of their own. In each case, a mist, or something similar, rose from a person's body at the time or death, except that in one case, it was the day before death. In Angela Moody's encounter, the unusual factor was that it occurred two hours after death.

The Spirit Wants to Stay

A male nurse named Timothy described the time he was on night duty when they had a patient who hated being on fluid restrictions, and was always on the call button. The nurses had to take turns answering the call button so that the primary nurse could do other work. This fellow passed away about 8 p.m., his family came and went by 9, and the funeral director by 9.30. Then -

> About 10 p.m., the call button starts going off. I was there—call button going off every 5 minutes. One of the nurses was a very spiritual girl. At about 2 a.m., after like 4 HOURS OF THIS, nurse Mary snaps, "Enough!"
>
> She walks down to the room, and, practically screams into the empty room, "Mr X, you have died. You can't be in here bothering us any more. Move along. In the name of Jesus, I'm exorcising you from this plane of existence. Go to the light and be happy!"

And I kid you not, the call button stopped going off then and there.[xlix]

Just One of Those Things

The late Mary Rose Barrington, of the Society for Psychical Research, was interested in a phenomenon she labelled *jott*, for "just one of those things", and wrote a book about it.[l] It's something we're all familiar with: an item, usually a small one, inexplicably goes missing. Some time later it turns up in a place where it has no right to be or, even more puzzling, appears staring you in the face in an area which had already been thoroughly searched. Mostly we can put it down to absent mindedness, or some such "rational" explanation, but the cases she documented are much harder to explain. And no. 36 involved a ghost!

A month after she had lost her husband, ERC lost a bracelet given to her by her late husband, so that afternoon she and a friend searched for it thoroughly, including "every inch of the ground between the car and the front door." Before going to bed she addressed (?prayed to) her late husband aloud, asking him to find the bracelet. That evening her daughter was out on a date. At 1 a.m. she and her boyfriend burst into the bedroom to report that they had *both* seen her husband looking out through the kitchen window. To cut a long story short, at 6 o'clock, when it was barely daylight, she decided to take her dog for a walk. When she returned about 9, lo and behold! there was the bracelet just below the milk bottles. The milkman insisted he had never seen it. It hadn't been there when ERC had left at 6, and certainly not when she and her friend had combed the whole area the previous afternoon.

105 and Going Strong

Catherine Crowe received this from the witness himself, who was a landlord in Ireland. One day, while walking down the road, he met a very old man dressed in what appeared to be his Sunday best, and he was surprised at both his apparent great age and the sprightliness of his step. On being hailed, the old man gave his name as Kirkpatrick, and pointed out the cottage where he lived. The witness expressed surprise that he had not met him before, since he tried to be acquainted with all his tenants.

"It is odd that you never should have seen me before," replied the old man, "for I walk here every day."

How old was he? “I am one hundred and five,” he answered, “and have been here all my life.”

After they separated, the witness asked some labourers, but they did not know him. However, when he inquired among his older tenants, they told him that they had known Mr. Kirkpatrick before the landlord took over the estate, and he had lived in the cottage on the hill, but he had passed away twenty years before. He had been eighty-five years old. Then the landlord did his sums: 85 + 20 = 105![li]

The Phantom Servant

This happened in the nineteenth century, and the narrator was “a distinguished Indian officer”. He and some friends had just finished lunch at a mutual friend’s place, and their host decided to take them around to see some alterations he was making to the grounds. While they in the process of doing so, a native servant approached the narrator and asked him to accompany him back to the house, as his hostess wanted to speak to him. He followed him back to the homestead, through the verandah, and into the dining room, where the servant left him. He waited. When nothing happened, he called his hostess by name several times. Still nobody came. Frustrated, he went back to verandah and asked the durzee (tailor) there for the whereabouts of the first servant.

> The durzee replied, ‘Your Excellency, no one came with you.’ ‘But,’ I said, ‘the man lifted the chik’ (the outside verandah blind) ‘for me’. ‘No, your Excellency, you lifted it yourself,’ the durzee answered.

How puzzling! He returned to his friends and told them. They both said that they had seen no servant.

> ’Why, you don’t mean to say I have not been in the house?’ I replied. ‘Oh, yes; you were in the midst of saying something about the alterations, when you suddenly stopped, and walked back to the house; we could not tell why,’ they both said. I was in perfect health at the time of the occurrence, and continued to be so after it[lii].

The interesting thing is, if he had been alone at the time, or if he hadn’t spoken to the durzee or his friends about it, he would never have had any reason to believe the person who accosted him had not been flesh and blood. I wonder how often that happens and is overlooked.

Barefoot in the Snow

Mrs. V. A. Martin told how, back in 1959, at the age of nineteen, she was visiting Alnwick in Northumberland. In fact, she was waiting in a bus shelter at about two in the afternoon, on a cold day with snow all around. On her right stood an elderly lady in a long, black dress, with a shawl over her shoulders, her hair in a bun, and deep, tired, sunken eyes in her thin face. The future Mrs. Martin (I don't suppose she was married at 19) didn't mention how the lady turned up; perhaps she hadn't noticed, or perhaps she had forgotten, but the lady did comment on the cold, and asked if she could have a pair of socks. It was then that the witness noticed that she was barefooted.

We've heard about people who are kind enough to give you the shirt off their back but, seriously, what would you yourself do if some pathetic person was barefooted in the snow, and asked for your socks? Mrs. Martin kindly gave the old lady her own. The latter thanked her, pulled on the socks, then vanished in front of her eyes, *taking the socks with her*. To this, all Mrs. Martin could add was:

> I presumed she had died in or near that spot and that other people had seen her; perhaps many pairs of socks were now in her spirit possession. I was glad to help this poor unfortunate lady and maybe ease the pain of this earthbound soul. Throughout the encounter, she looked as real and as solid as a living human being.[liii]

CHAPTER 7

Hauntings

In the last chapter we examined cases of one-off encounters with what are usually called ghosts. Some cases could be interpreted as a newly deceased person "touching base" at home before, hopefully, moving on to higher things. However, with others—the case of 105/85 year old Mr. Kirkpatrick is an obvious example—it appears the path of a living person happened by chance to cross that of a ghost who was, so to speak, always there. If a ghost is manifested, or perceived, repeatedly in a specific case, this ends up being labelled a "haunting". Here, then, is a selection of hauntings, again chosen for their variety.

The Other Woman

Mrs. Joan Read was working in the Manor House Archive Department at Lee, England when a very agitated young man came in and told her she was his last hope; he was getting desperate, and his wife was threatening to leave him. It transpired that some time previously a friend arrived, but when he opened the door, his friend said, "Not while you've got company."

Company? There was no-one else in the house; his wife had gone shopping. But the friend insisted he could see a young lady on the stairs. The man shut the door on him, but he returned several other times and insisted he could see the young lady. Worse, his wife was reporting seeing her. They agreed she was younger than his wife, with an attractive face and figure. The only person who couldn't see her was the poor husband!

He told her he was living in the old coach house belonging to Dacre House. Mrs. Read was able to make a few suggestions as to who the ghost might be, and that was the last she ever saw of the young man[liv]. I hope he patched things up with his wife. Otherwise, the divorce proceedings would have made interesting reading!

The One Legged Ghost

In 1979, shortly after a family moved into a particular house in Surrey, the wife started seeing a middle aged woman with one leg, who would

vanish into thin air. Because this happened only when the wife was alone upstairs, she said nothing, until one day her daughter reported seeing her. The wife then drew a sketch of the ghostly visitor to show to longer established neighbours. It wasn't long before she was identified as Anne Allen, who had been a tenant of the upstairs part of the house when it had been divided into flats. Thirty years before, she had returned home from hospital following the amputation of one of her legs, only to find an eviction order awaiting her. She had hanged herself in what was now the master bedroom.

The couple then took the obvious step, which nevertheless seems to be overlooked by so many people troubled by ghosts: they called in the church. Exorcism is used by the Church of England only for evil presences; for the laying of ghosts they perform a Requiem mass and pray for the unquiet spirit to rest in peace. With this in mind, Bishop Dominic Walker, the co-chairman of the Christian Deliverance Study Group, began the service in the master bedroom, using the dressing table as an altar. Suddenly, he was startled to see Anne Allen standing next to him, but he carried on, and at the completion of the service, she smiled and vanished. She hasn't been back since.[lv]

Ian Wilson drew a comparison with Billy Graham's grandfather, Ben who had lost an eye and a leg in the American Civil War. But on her deathbed, his widow suddenly sat up in bed and announced: "There is Ben, and he has both of his eyes and both of his legs."[lvi] Mortals cannot judge, of course, but we may speculate that this represents the difference between a lost soul and a saved one. Dr. Moody found that attempted suicides typically had distressing near death experiences. One woman told him that if you leave as a tormented soul, you will remain a tormented soul over there.[lvii]

A Very Troubled Apartment

Denny Casely never really believed in the supernatural until she and her family moved from Canada to England in 1996 and rented a flat on the top floor of a "huge Victorian house": 5C Molyneux Park Road (town not mentioned, but I presume it was Tunbridge Wells, Kent). Strange things would happen. There was a huge black streak in her five year old daughter's room, which they could remove, but it would always return. Every now and then, a room would turn freezing cold in an instant. She said it was possible

to take a step forward and feel the cold, then take a step back and not feel it. People familiar with the literature on hauntings and poltergeists will be aware that this is not uncommon.

With her husband at work and her daughter at school, Mrs. Casely spent much of her time alone in the flat, and she began to suffer mental problems: long periods of depression and anxiety, and she would hear voices. She would be washing her hair and be overcome with the sensation that if she opened her eyes she would find somebody ready to plunge a knife into her. Of course, this might have had nothing to do with the flat itself, but you never can tell.

Then there was "jott", to use the term of Mary Rose Barrington. (See last chapter.) Pieces of jewellery would go missing, then reappear the next day, causing her to make distraught accusations against her husband and daughter. Then it started happening to her husband. When his wallet disappeared from the table where he had just left it, just as he was able to head off to work, she snapped, and screamed at whatever-was-there to put it back. They walked out of the room, waited a beat, and went back inside. The wallet was back where it was supposed to be. That evening, he tried an experiment. He removed the batteries from the TV remote control, and yelled: "If there is a ghost in here, turn off my TV. I want to go to bed." It did—right away. He yelled at it to turn it back on, and off again, and so on. It did. Another time, a young couple had to spend the night in the lounge, only to have the TV and stereo turn off and on all night, even after being unplugged.

By now you may be asking: where are the apparitions? This sounds more like a poltergeist infestation. Well, the couple confined to the lounge were afraid to leave because a young woman was walking the landing, but it is not clear from the account whether this was an apparition or a live person from somewhere else in the building. Nevertheless, early in the piece their daughter started to report "imaginary friends". Children are often more sensitive to this sort of thing than adults, and one of those characters was Robber Jones. Mr. Casely possessed a Japanese sword, which made Robber Jones dislike him because "Robber Jones was killed by a big knife in France, during a big fire." Later, both husband and wife started seeing apparitions—*of their daughter!* They would see her at various places (Mrs. Casely said she had "the most incredible sadness in her face") and on each

occasion, the little girl would be sleeping, or in some other situation with someone else.

Obviously, this was not your ordinary haunting. The overshadowing of the wife, affecting her moods, the apparitions of the daughter, and the poltergeist activity are proof of that. Neither was it typical of a poltergeist infestation. Despite being one of the most common, and best documented, paranormal phenomenon, the nature of poltergeists is an enigma. Traditionally thought of as mischievous, but not malicious, spirits (but not ghosts), they are now more often regarded as the manifestation of the troubled mind of a living individual—what I prefer to call a "psychic tantrum". In any case, they are only marginally related to "ghosts", except that occasionally they occur in the presence of apparitions. (Well, perhaps ghosts can have a psychic tantrum as well.) Typically, but not always, they focus on a specific person in a household. And the phenomenon is normally short-lived (thankfully!). When it is long lasting, it tends to follow the person rather than the place. In other words, there are some people who, for several years, produce poltergeist effects wherever they go. However, in this case, the Caselies lodged at no. 5C for nearly two years, and a tenant downstairs told them that the landlord had difficulty getting people to sign long term tenancies. Also, three years after they left, they met another couple who had experienced the same disturbances in the same flat after them.[lviii]

No, it looks more like a case for Bishop Walker. The flat appears to have been, and perhaps still is, the haunt of one or more presences which are not evil, but very troubled. Whether they ever possessed a human body is something we might speculate on.

The Ghost and Betty Hill

The late Betty Hill will always be remembered for her part, along with her husband, Barney, in the first publicised alien abduction case in 1961. It has overshadowed her lifetime of social work, but without it, no-one would have recorded her other unusual experiences, which really deserve to be remembered.

For a start, she had precognitive dreams. But what interests us here is that she frequently got involved with an entity which shared her sister's home for at least thirty years. It was never seen, but because it was not attached to any one person, but even changed houses, responded to

requests, and wept, I judge it was not a poltergeist. It appears to have been that rarest of psychic entities: an independent and intelligent ghost. Most other ghosts tend to get caught up in monotonous, repetitive behaviour.

At any interview in 1976[lix], she explained that it was first noticed in the early 1940s, when her sister, Janet was repeatedly correcting her three children for pranks they denied doing—things like spilling the contents of the waste paper basket all over the kitchen floor. Even as they got older, they insisted they hadn't been to blame.

Eventually, at some point or other, she went to a psychic, who told her that it was caused by the ghost of a child called Hannah, who had been adopted by the neighbours who rescued her from a fire which had killed her parents. Nevertheless, she had died at the age of five or six from a fall from horseback. That was about a hundred years before, and the present house was where Hannah once lived. Now, personally, I have a great deal of suspicion of such self-identified "psychics". Even if they are completely sincere, how do we know that the impressions they get are not their own imagination? Janet pointed out that the land had been in her family since the 1840s, and there had been no former house there, but the psychic insisted there had been. A few years later, however, while digging a trench on the side of the house, she discovered old cellar walls. A detailed search of the archives then established that the psychic had been right all along!

Unlike the Sunday school teacher's children, who visited Daisy on her deathbed (Chapter 4), poor, earthbound Hannah never grew up. They would often hear her sobbing, and crying, "Mommy, Mommy." Once it happened when a friend of the family was at the door. "Is that your grandson?" he asked.

"No," she replied.

"You're taking care of some neighbour's child?'

"No.'

"Well, where is the child crying?"

"Oh," said Janet, "I never told you, but that's our spirit, Hannah." He took off. I can't imagine why!

Hannah appeared to be fond of the middle child, Glenn, and when he went away to service, she moved into his room. When he came back, however, she was most annoyed. Night after night, she would wake him up and throw all her clothes around. Betty herself witnessed some of this.

Later, when their niece's husband stayed in the room, he was kept awake by her rattling things in the closet and weeping.

An unusual feature of this haunting, which is almost unheard of elsewhere, was Hannah's interactions with the family, and her movements. According to Betty, Hannah was never in two places at once. If she was knocking on the door of Betty and Janet's mother, she wouldn't be disturbing Janet. Once Janet got fed up, and told her: "Look, Hannah, I've had it with you. You go over to Sheila's." Sheila, the wife of her nephew, knew nothing of this until the knobs of the stove came off and fell to the floor in front of her eyes. Sheila got on the phone and demanded Janet take her back, or she'd bring her back herself. Another time, Betty and Janet left New Hampshire for Ohio in order to see their niece. After two days, Janet suddenly felt Hannah grab her hand. Before they left, their niece insisted they make sure Hannah went with them.

It was later, in the 1960s, that Betty offered to take Hannah off Janet's hands for a couple of days. She told how eerie it was to hear Hannah enter the room, cough, and start rocking in the rocking chair. She also used the rocking chair at Janet's, their mother's, and Sheila's place.

Finally, after 28 years, Janet's marriage began breaking up, so she went out and got a job. On the second day of the new job, she, and everybody in the office, were startled to see the file racks moving all by themselves. So, on returning home, Janet laid down the law to Hannah: "Let me tell you, you stay home, or you can go to Grandmother's, or Sheila's, but you're not going to where I work." But sometimes afterwards she would have to remind her.

These activities were taking place right up to the date of the interview. It must have been an interesting household to live it. I wonder if Hannah is still there and, if so, whether the current occupants are so tolerant.

The Haunted Movie Star

Surely we all remember Elke Sommer, the blond German bombshell whose curves and pretty face graced many a Hollywood comedy in the 1960s and later! She was, in the words of her then husband, journalist and screen writer, Joe Hyams, "a girl who once killed a rattlesnake in our backyard with a pair of garden shears, and who fears only spiders and critics." No doubt that was a good thing, because their home was different from the average Beverley Hills residence. It was haunted[lx].

On 6 July 1964, a few days after they moved in (I believe the address was 2633 Benedict Canyon), Elke was having afternoon coffee with her friend, Edith Dahlfeld, when the latter asked her if she were going to introduce her to the man who had just walked into the dining room from the hall. Thinking it was her husband, Elke entered the dining room, and then the kitchen. Both were empty. But Mrs Dahlfeld insisted she had seen a husky, broad-shouldered, 50-something man, thinning on top, and with a "potato" nose. He had been wearing dark slacks, a white shirt, and black tie.

Two weeks later, Elke's mother was sleeping in the downstairs bedroom when she suddenly woke to find a man standing at the foot of her bed, staring at her. Just as she was about to scream for help, he vanished.

Interestingly, neither Joe nor Elke ever saw the apparition, but about that time they started to hear noises from the dining room at night, as if the chairs were being pushed back by a group of dinner guests in the process of departing. But the chairs themselves were never moved.

Then, on 8 August, Elke left for filming in Yugoslavia. Alone in the house, Joe always had the uncanny feeling he was not alone—especially at night. Invariably, he would lock the downstairs bedroom window, but on three occasions it came open. Twice, he heard the front door open and shut, although it was always found bolted in the morning. And the noise of rearranging of furniture continued.

So one day, he rigged up a system of microphones, radios, and tape recorder to the driveway, the front door, and the dining room, and he marked the position of the chairs on the floor with chalk. Then he retired to the upstairs bedroom and waited. Soon, the familiar noises began. A .38 calibre pistol in his hand, and silence in his tread, he sneaked downstairs and abruptly switched on the dining room light. Nothing. The sounds immediately stopped. The chairs were still within their chalk marks. But -

> Upstairs later [he reported], I listened to the tape recording. The noises had stopped when I went downstairs. The sound of the switch snapping on, and even my nervous cough, had come through clearly—and so had the sound of chairs being moved after I left the room again.

Somewhat unnerved, he invited a friend, George Mueller to stay with him, but made no mention of the ghost. Obligingly, the ghost stayed away. But once Joe went to Yugoslavia, and left George in the house alone, the latter found that every time he went into the dining room, the hairs would

stand up on the back of his neck. He kept hearing strange noises, and the downstairs bedroom window came open.

Mr Mueller always locked up the house at night, but the private detective hired to check up on it found the windows open on several occasions, although nothing was missing. Once, when Mueller was absent, the private eye kept it under 24 hour surveillance. At 2.30 a.m., all the lights suddenly went on, only to go off just before he reached the house. An electrician was unable to explain it. And, once the owners were back, the same old noises reoccurred.

While they were away in 1965, a friend was asked to check on their house every now and then. But no matter how often he locked the house, a door would always come open. The man who cleaned the swimming pool asked who was staying in the house. No-one. But he saw a man in the dining room, and when he went to ask when the Hyams were coming back, the man evaporated in front of his eyes. The figure was of a big, heavy-set man about six feet tall, with a white shirt and a black tie. Just like the one Mrs Dahlfeld had seen. In September 1965, their friend, John Sherlock asked to stay overnight while they were away. But the next day, he cleared out. It turned out that he had entered about 11 p.m., and had the strong feeling that someone was watching him. He left a light on in the hallway and went to bed in the downstairs bedroom about 12.45, but:

> "Just as I started to climb into bed with my back to the hallway I felt certain someone was near and turned around. In the doorway I saw the figure of a man, almost six feet tall, staring at me. He was wearing dark trousers, a white shirt and a dark tie. I have never had such a feeling of menace."

He got dressed and hurried into the hallway, but the spectre was gone. Nevertheless, Sherlock could feel his presence.

What about the previous owners of the house? The people from whom they had bought it lived there only a year and a half. They never saw anything, but heard quite a bit. Then, when the wife was home alone, she was awakened about 11 a.m. by footsteps in the dining room below. She called a friend and asked to stay with her. Then she locked herself in the bedroom and called a taxi. The taxi stopped in the driveway, and she waited for the driver to ring the bell. When he didn't, she called out from the upstairs window. When she finally got into the car, the driver told her that he had assumed the man standing by the door was the fare, but he simply

vanished when she shouted from the window. The second owner told them they had stayed there only a year, because the wife was convinced it was haunted

By now, a lot of investigations had been completed.

> The termite inspectors, private detectives and electronics experts say that no human being could have secret access to the house, and a thorough search of the premises proved that we don't have squirrels in the eaves, branches rubbing across windows, or reflecting areas that produce ghostly images. A geologist reported that the land is not shifting, and a construction man stated that the house is completely solid.

It was time to bring in the A.S.P.R. : the American Society for Psychical Research. I always thought of psychic researchers as setting up infrared cameras, microphones, and fine threads and powder to detect physical intruders, but instead, the A.S.P.R. led through the house a long line of psychics or sensitives, all when the householders were absent, to ensure that the vibes they picked up were from the ethereal residents and not from the minds of the physical ones.

Now you will see why I have such suspicions about "psychics": they all found different ghosts. But even if there were a whole tribe of lost souls in there, you would have expected the psychics to have each discovered more than one. The first one detected a heavy-set European man with a moustache, who was fond of music and spent his earthly life giving of himself. The one detected by the second psychic, on the contrary, was a real "monster": big, untidy, full of hate, and drunk. Psychic number three, however, discovered a 17-year-old blond girl who died three years before in Europe, and whose house had burned down in the interval. Elke was startled; the description precisely matched a woman she knew. But when two other psychics independently identified a 58-year-old doctor who died of a heart attack, Joe recognised a man he knew, and Elke recognised her father (who had been a Lutheran pastor).

In fact, Elke felt strongly that the ghost was her father, but she was still concerned, so, after two years, they decided on an exorcism. Alas! They couldn't get a clergyman, so they settled for one of the psychics. Although she actually invoked the name of Jesus, it was obvious that, like the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:14-17), it was being treated as a magic word. The ghost was

not impressed. You can't trade on the King's authority unless you have the King's commission. The phenomena returned that very night.

That is as far as the article I am citing takes us. Joe Hyams insisted that he wouldn't allow a living person to drive him out of their house, and he wasn't going to let a dead one do so either. However, an internet search informs me that they changed their mind when forced to flee through the window from a mysterious fire. They had been awakened by a ghostly knocking on the bedroom door, so the ghost couldn't have been too bad. Hyams wrote a book about it called, *The Day I Gave Up the Ghost*. It is said that the house had changed hands seventeen times since they left it; that's an average of less than three years per owner. Something in that house discourages residents.

The Ghost That Stumbled

This is the story of the first ghost encounter by the celebrated psychic researcher, Harry Price (1881—1948), which he related in both his autobiography, *Search for Truth* (1942) and *Poltergeist Over England* (1945). From this, you will gather that he considered the entity a poltergeist, because it made a sound without being visible. I have my doubts, but it is certain that poltergeist phenomena do occasionally occur during more traditional "hauntings".

In any case, it must have taken place in early October 1896, because he was fifteen years old at the time, and was returning to school for the Michaelmas term. On the way, he decided to break his journey and stay with friends in a Shropshire hamlet where he used to spend nearly all his holidays and vacations. This time, however, he discovered that the talk of the hamlet was the strange goings-on in the old Manor House, a building constructed about AD 1600 and, like any respectable old building in merry England, reputedly haunted.

Except this time it really was haunted. It had recently been purchased by a retired canon of the church and his wife. Within a few weeks of their moving in, strange things began happening in the stables and out-buildings: animals untethered, pans of milk overturned, utensils scattered—the usual. Nearly every night something would be disturbed in the woodshed, but when a watch was set inside, nothing happened—inside. But stones would rain on the roof from outside

Then, quite suddenly, it all ceased—in the outbuildings. Instead, the phenomena moved to the manor house itself: the pattering of a child's bare feet in the gallery, kitchen utensils disturbed, and the fires being raked out at night so frequently that the canon's wife took to pouring water on the embers before going to bed. One wonders why the church didn't simply exorcise the entity. The last straw was a heavy thumping, as of someone in heavy boots stomping through the house at night. The owners decided to decamp for a while.

This, then, was the situation when the future psychic researcher visited the village, so he invited one of his male friends to join him in investigating the place. All he had was a ¼-plate Lancaster stand camera. You have to remember how very primitive was the art of photography in 1896. Cameras had to be mounted on a stand, and a flash produced by igniting some magnesium powder with an electric spark from a battery. Digging deep into his term pocket money, Master Price purchased the rest of the equipment and, lest the magnesium powder fail to flash, he mixed in some gunpowder from four or five sporting cartridges.

It was about 9.30 pm when they entered the Manor House. I was perplexed at first that he gave no indication as to how they gained entry. On second thought, however, it was unlikely he would need to explain it to readers in the 1940s. They would be aware that no-one locked doors in quiet hamlets at that time. They probably still don't. (We certainly didn't do so in the Brisbane suburbs when I was a boy.) The first thing they did on entry was, by the light of a stable lantern, to search every room and attic, fasten every window, lock all the doors and remove the keys, and barricade the doors to the exterior with pieces of furniture. Nothing of flesh and blood was going to get in on their watch!

Now picture the geography of the house. The teenage trespassers were settled in the downstairs morning room. From the adjacent hall a fifteen-step stairway led to an upper gallery from which the important rooms of the house branched off. But at the top of the stairway stood a small gate—which the boys fastened with a bit of string—whose original purpose was to prevent the household dogs entering the more comfortable parts of the house.

About half past eleven they heard a thud from upstairs as if someone had stumbled against a chair. Their blood began to run cold. Then, just before midnight came the sound of some heavy person stomping around

upstairs in clogs, before stomping down the short gallery. It paused briefly at the dog-gate. They always wondered whether it stepped over it, as a mortal would do, or merely passed through it. Next, they counted fifteen loud clomps as "it" descended the fifteen stairs, paused for about three minutes, then stamped heavily on each of the fifteen steps as it returned up the stairway. Again, there was a pause at the dog-gate, but just as the boys were planning to investigate, clomp! clomp! clomp! down came the ghost, down all fifteen steps. Again a pause in the hall, and then "it" started to ascend again. By now their courage had returned. When the fifth step was reached, Master Price opened the door, his "courage in one hand, and the camera in the other", with his friend close behind with the lantern.

Nothing! All the sounds had ceased. Perhaps the entity was just as afraid of them as they had been of it. They decided to examine the entire hall and stairway. Nothing was amiss. It was time to put the camera into use. They brought out some household steps which had been found in the kitchen, and set them up twelve feet from the bottom of the stairs. They were six feet high. Now Harry took out some chalk and, using a book as a set-square, drew a square on the floor in order to ensure that the steps were exactly parallel to the stairs. The camera was placed on one of the steps. He stationed his friend on the seventh or eighth step with a lighted match so that he could focus the lens on him. He could thus be sure that the ghost would be in focus. He heaped up about an eggcupful of magnesium-gunpowder mixture in a watch-case, and inserted the photographic plate, after which they retreated to the morning room with the electrical apparatus.

All this time their invisible companion had remained completely silent. Should they photograph it as it was descending or ascending? They decided on the latter, for their juvenile reasoning was that it would be less concerned once it had already inspected the apparatus. About an hour passed, then the heavy footsteps recommenced in the upper story. This time there was a longer pause at the dog-gate then, clomp! clomp! clomp! down it came. Once the hall had been reached, there was silence for five or six minutes, then the footsteps started back up the stairs.

> At the seventh thump I pressed the button of my pear-push and—a most extraordinary thing happened, which is difficult to describe on paper. At the moment of the explosion the ghost was so startled *that it involuntarily stumbled* on the stairs, as we could plainly hear, and then there was silence. At the same moment there was a clattering down the

stairs as if the spontaneous disintegration of the disturbing entity had taken place. [emphasis in the original]

Even the morning room was lit up by the rays of the flash emerging from under the door. They rushed into the hall, now thick with smoke. The household steps had been moved slightly out of the chalk square, they did not know how. On the second stair from the bottom they found the empty watch-case. It had apparently been turned into a projectile by the explosion, and had produced the clatter which had puzzled them. Poor blooming ghost! It couldn't even stomp around a house without some crazy kids shooting at it! They didn't appear to have heard anything more from it that night, though apparently the house continued to be the centre of phenomena for some months.

And the photograph? It revealed a very much over-exposed staircase.

Don't you wish life was as exciting as that when you were fifteen? Shortly afterwards, Harry Price started an amateur dramatic society, and when he was seventeen he wrote and starred in a three-act play called *The Sceptic*, which featured a cardboard ghost. It would be interesting to read the script, for it was based on this adventure.

The Drowned Woman

This will count as a haunting because the ghost was seen on three separate occasions by three different people over a period of less than a week, and it has a number of unusual features. Ironically, although the narrator, Sarita Bradley of Washington, D.C. claimed that she had lived in the same house with her mother all her life, the apparition was never seen before or since. She did mention that it backed onto a cemetery.[lxi]

It was about three in the morning, six years before, when she was aged 33 and, as usual, she was unable to sleep. Her pet hamster was kicking out the wood shavings from its cage, so she got up to clean it out. I presume she turned on the light. An action by her hamster caused her to look towards the open door. Suddenly, it became very cold, and she felt the hair prickle on the back of her neck.

Out of the bathroom (or toilet—the terms seem to be interchangeable in America) floated the apparition of a white woman with shoulder length black hair, streaked with grey, and parted down the middle. Barefoot, and clad in a white nightgown, she was soaking wet from head to foot, with the water apparently dripping onto the floor as she passed. (But there was no

mention of the floor being wet afterwards.) Sarita was so absolutely terrified she lost even the ability to scream. To add to the horror, the "drowned woman" turned towards her with a sad, sombre expression which changed to an angry, evil frown, and she could feel the hate radiating at her as the apparition passed the door and out of sight.

Sarita managed to summon the will to close the bedroom door, then sat in the room the remainder of the night with the light on. When she told her mother, sister, and niece, they wouldn't believe her. But that evening, she and her mother were upstairs, when her sister decided to go downstairs to retrieve her slippers. The light in the living room was the only one on downstairs. Seconds later, her sister let out a blood curdling scream and scrambled up the stairs on hands and knees, babbling incoherently. When she finally settled down enough, she explained that she had been on her knees, reaching under the sofa for her slippers when something made her look towards the dining room. Coming into the living room was a woman in a nightgown (there was no mention of it being wet), with an angry, evil face, and arms reaching out towards her. What surprised Sarita was that the apparition appeared older than the previous evening; this time she had grey hair extending to her waist. In any case, the sister refused to stay the night, but instead went over to a friend's place.

Two days later, Sarita's 18-year-old niece came over to visit, and the two were chatting in the bedroom when her niece went into the bathroom to wash her hands. Suddenly, she came flying out, screaming, and fled downstairs. Her aunt caught up with her outside the door, repeating "I saw her, I saw her, I saw her." After calming down, she related how she had entered the bathroom without turning on the light, because the light from the hallway provided enough illumination. As she was washing her hands, she looked in the mirror, only to see, gazing back at her, an old woman with long, grey hair and an evil grimace on her face.

The author said that no-one ever saw her again, but for a while afterwards the taps in the bathroom would turn on by themselves, and they would hear knocking, but there would be nobody there.

Haunted Hospitals

The All Nurses forum on ghosts has so many entries on haunted hospitals it is difficult to know which to choose. I have only had to modify

the stories to expand acronyms and jargon, and to correct the occasional typo.

The first one wasn't actually in a hospital. The witness had been a paramedic before becoming a nurse, and he recalled one patient who, all the way to the hospital, was telling him about all the spirits she could see in the ambulance. There must, she said, have been a lot of people who died in it. Then, just as they were entering the hospital parking bay, she sat up, yelled "Oh God!", clutched her chest, and died.[lxii]

Moving to hospitals, another nurse told the story of "Rocking Mary".

> We closed room 12 in our MICU [medical intensive care unit] because just about every patient that has been there since Mary died complained of seeing a woman in wearing a white habit rocking back and forth by their bedside. Apparently this nun never makes eye contact…just stares outside the window which happens to be on the patient's left side over their head. This window overlooks the hospital cemetery where nuns that have died were buried. Mary was a nun that died of a car accident outside the hospital back in the 50's. She was only about 30 years old and all the patients describe her as a young woman. We all thought that it was the "sun-down syndrome." Anyway, since then room 12 became our storage room where no one goes in by themselves unless it is absolutely critical.[lxiii]

Another nurse had this to say:

> I work in a long term care facility and we have had numerous reports from patients that they have seen a little boy. This boy comes in their rooms, turns their call lights on and off, throw things on the floor. This facility used to be an orphanage!! Also there are stories of a old fashioned nurse in the whole white dress and hat, who would be seen going down the hall late at night doing her bed check and would go into someone's room and stay there for a couple minutes if they were really sick or about to die. Well I guess one aide saw her awhile back and refused to go down that hall for a week.[lxiv]

The very next entry was from a nursing aide whom I suspect is male, who announced:

> We have a white figure that has been seen in the medicine room. Sometimes the carts are moved down the hall while you are in a room giving medicines, etc. One of the male CNAs [certified nursing assistants] reported seeing a very tall black figure going from room to

> room several times. We have all seen balls of light floating around. From what we have been able to gather from old pictures of the property that the nursing home is on there was a mobile home park at one end and a cemetery at the other end of the building. Everyone has seen a little boy walking around but the freakiest part was when they saw wet children's foot prints coming down the hall and followed them to the wall and there were footprints in the snow outside that came right to that place in the wall.[lxv]

At that point, they had an entry from Timothy who, you may remember, told the story of the spirit who wanted to stay (Chapter 6). This time he described how his Intensive Care Unit had taken in a black girl of about the age of ten, who had suffered terrible brain injuries in a motor vehicle accident. She had stayed in that ward for weeks before being transferred to another ward, where she died. After that, he reported, he had had three black male patients aged in their fifties who,

> if they were even mildly sedated, would ask about the little black girl with the ribbon in her hair who was sitting at the foot of their beds. One guy said, "She asked me how I was doing, and then got up and walked that way" while he was pointing towards the 2nd floor window. He paused, a wide-eyed look came over his face, and then he said, "But I guess she really couldn't have left the room that way, huh?"[lxvi]

I wonder if there was any significance in the fact that the witnesses were the same race as the ghost. I presume there would have been a lot of white patients in the ICU as well, so it was probably not just a coincidence. Was she attracted to them, or were they the only ones capable of seeing her?

He also mentioned an ICU he worked in where a convicted murderer died. After that, the atmosphere in the room was so "heavy", "dark", and "spooky" that no-one would put a patient in it, even if there was no other bed. Eventually, the hospital closed down the room.

He next repeated a story told to him directly from the witness, another male nurse. While seated at a desk, he saw a fellow in a white nursing costume come through the double doors, then enter an empty room, and not come out. He investigated the room, and there was no-one in it. Two technicians outside the double doors also insisted they had seen nobody pass through. Later a colleague told him that "we see him all the time". He

had been a licenced vocational nurse who, on being accused of molesting a child, committed suicide by jumping out of the window of that room.[lxvii]

But enough of this raconteur. A nurse going by the username of Ruby Vee, who had forty years' experience in her career, and had been married twice, both to nurses, said that every hospital she had worked in had had at least one ghost. Years before, she had worked in the old Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. They had moved into a new tower, and the old building was scheduled for demolition, so several of them decided to walk through the old unit one last time. As they strolled past what had once been a large men's ward, but which was now supposed to be empty, they noticed two figures. One of her coworkers investigated, only

> to come out with a face as white as a sheet. [Ruby] then looked in, only to see two old men sitting on an old bed chatting. But her colleague informed her that she had recognized them as two frequent patients in the ward. They had been right pains in you-know-where while they were alive, which they weren't any more.[lxviii]

I shall finish this chapter with the following strange story from another male nurse.

> I used to work in an old Catholic hospital. Where the labour and delivery unit is located now, it used to be the convent for the nuns that worked at this hospital. One of the nuns died of natural causes years ago. This nun loved and raised numerous varieties of roses. Ever since the obstetrics department was moved to this area, any time a mother or baby is having difficulties you can smell the scent of roses throughout the whole unit. The obstetric nurses know to be prepared when they start smelling the scent of roses. If a mother or baby dies, the room suddenly fills with rose petals. It is one of the creepiest, but also loving things that happens. I was standing in a room one night when the baby died. The room filled with white and pink rose petals. The nurses and family was creeped out[lxix].

When queried by another nurse, he confirmed that the rose petals did indeed materialise out of thin air; the room was just showered with them, floating down from the ceiling. He added that this had happened several times over the years.

I know this sounds fantastic, but although this sort of thing is rare under the circumstances mentioned, *apports*, or the mysterious materialisation of objects out of thin air, often from the ceiling, is a well

established phenomenon during poltergeist infestations[lxx]. It is just that official science has decided to ignore it.

CHAPTER 8

Pray for the Ghost of …

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine: Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord.

These opening words of the Latin mass for the dead give us the popular name for it: the requiem mass. The tradition of prayer for the dead dates back to the earliest centuries of Christianity, even before the introduction of the doctrine of purgatory (which, incidentally, the eastern churches have never accepted). However, its use for laying of ghosts is something new, although you will remember that the Church of England has adopted the requiem mass for that purpose. But what is most extraordinary is for a ghost itself to request such prayers. Nevertheless, that appears to have occurred more than a century and a half ago. Practically the whole chapter 15 of Catherine Crowe's book, *The Night-Side of Nature* is taken up with the description of one such case.[lxxi]

Justinus Kerner (1786—1862) was the German doctor who first provided a detailed description of botulism. He was also known as a poet. Less well known was that he was an early psychic researcher. In this capacity, he compiled a report, complete with the signed testimonies of many witnesses, on the extraordinary events in the prison at Weinsberg in 1835, centring on a widowed peasant woman aged 38, called Elisabeth Eslinger, who was apparently incarcerated for what we might consider a trivial offence: treasure hunting.

The saga began on 12 September, when the deputy governor of the jail, Herr Mayer submitted a report to the relevant magistrates that Mrs. Eslinger claimed to be visited about 11 o'clock every night by a ghost who demanded she release him. Significantly, included in the report was a deposition by her cell mate, Rosina Schahl describing the effects of the nocturnal visits on Mrs. Eslinger, and tellingly, added: "Last night I saw a shadowy form, between four and five feet high, standing near the bed; I did not see it move." The court resolved that Mrs. Eslinger be visited by the prison physician.

The doctor reported that the patient was apparently of sound mind except for this fixed idea about the ghost. She claimed that she had always been able to see ghosts, but this was the first one which had communicated with her. It had appeared to her prior to her imprisonment; indeed, she had wanted to use it in the search for treasure. At home, it had appeared as a pillar of cloud, out of which issued a hollow voice, but now it had taken the shape of a human being in a red robe, girdle, and four cornered hat. The figure possessed a projecting chin and forehead, a long beard, high, parchment-like cheekbones, and deep set, fiery eyes. She was able to see it by the light which radiated about its head. The ghost claimed to have been a Roman Catholic priest who had lived in Wimmerthal in 1414, and his conscience was heavy because of a fraud which he and his father had committed against his brothers. He requested that she go to the cellar of a woman called Singhaasen in Wimmerthal, and pray for him there. Why he should have chosen her is anyone's guess, for she not only lived in a different town, but was a Lutheran.

All this might suggest that the woman was suffering from some serious mental illness. However, it was claimed that a girl of fourteen had seen the ghost when it visited her at home, and the doctor said she confirmed it. More to the point, although her fellow prisoners did not see the ghostly visitor, they did perceive some of his effects i.e. the sound of the closing of the door, a shuffling in the passage, and a crackling, as well as the sensation of a cool wind, and an earthy smell—all this while Mrs. Eslinger gave evidence of the visit. On night, a large dog arrived with the ghost and leaped on the beds. Even her fellow prisoners saw it, and were terrified. "Fear not," said the ghost, "this is my father."

At the point, Dr. Kerner came onto the scene, and on 15 October shut himself up in Eslinger's cell without a light. About half past eleven he heard a sound like a hard body being thrown around, but on the opposite side to where the woman was. She immediately began to breathe heavily, and told him the ghost had arrived. He then laid his hand on her head and adjured the ghost to depart. Scarcely had he done so when he heard "a strange, rattling, crackling noise, all round the walls, which finally seemed to go out through the window."

Thus began a series of nights in which first Kerner, and then others, held vigil in the cell. In each case, Mrs. Eslinger reacted to the apparent visit of the ghost, and began praying, while the visitors experienced sounds

and smells, and sometimes lights, which were beyond explanation. For example, when Frau Mayer, the jailer's wife, and her niece, spent the night, a yellowish light entered through the window—she could see her own arms and hands—followed by a cool breeze, and a smell of putrefaction. The light moved up and down the room, and then both Frau Mayer and her niece heard it speak. The woman was praying; it was not her voice. It was hollow, and sounded like nothing a human being could make: "strange, supernatural sighs and entreaties for prayers and redemptions."

On 9 December, she and her niece, and the niece's servant, kept vigil. About midnight, she saw a white shape, like a small animal, arrive. Eslinger told her it was a lamb, which often came with the ghost. Then they watched as a nearby stool rose up and then set itself down on the floor. The prisoner, who was all the time in her bed, and praying, told them that the ghost had arrived, and was seated on the stool. Then came a lot of strange sounds, after which it spoke in the same hollow voice: "In the name of Jesus, look on me!" Now they could see a light, but no form. "Do you see me now?" demanded the hollow voice, and for the first time Frau Mayer saw a shadowy form.

One could fill several pages with such material. The testimonies of fellow prisoners, some of whom shared her cell, and some in adjacent cells, were provided in detail. It is the same story of a cold wind, shuffling, crackling, and sometimes the visible appearance of a vague human figure, and the voice. Once the court had convinced itself that there was no imposture, a number of men of science were asked to investigate it. Apart from Dr. Kerner and his son, the author gives a list of seven, and indicates that there were more, but the results were the same as before: all heard the noises, most saw the lights, some saw the figure. Not only that, but several asked that the ghost be sent to *their* rooms—and their wishes were granted.

The ghost still hung around the prison after Mrs. Eslinger had been released, and on 11 February he left her completely. By then, she had reluctantly determined to go to Wimmerthal and pray for him, as he had requested. While she was kneeling in prayer in the open, some of the friends who had accompanied her, standing silently thirty paces off, saw the apparition. One woman, Mrs. Wörner, who had been a stranger to her before she joined the company, offered to testify on oath that she saw the apparition of a man, accompanied by two smaller spectres, hovering by her as she prayed.

“When the prayer was ended, he [the apparition] went close to her, and there was a light like a falling star; then I saw something like a white cloud, that seemed to float away: and after that we saw no more.”

They had to revive Mrs. Eslinger, who was now lying unconscious on the street or pavement. She told her that when the ghost bade her farewell, he asked her to give him her hand. After wrapping it in a handkerchief, she complied, and when he touched it, a small flame arose from the handkerchief. The ghost ascended, accompanied by two bright, infantile forms, upon which Mrs. Eslinger saw a troop of frightful animals pass by. Then she fainted. Mrs. Wörter confirmed the marks of fingers on the handkerchief, like burns, but without the smell.

All this is an abbreviated version of the account, which you can easily access via the endnote I have supplied. So fantastic is the story that one would normally write it off as a delusion, if the only evidence were the testimony of Mrs. Eslinger, but the combined testimony of so many reliable witnesses compels us to accept it as an objective reality.

Nor is it unique. Catherine Crowe heard of similar cases from other German sources, both Catholic and Lutheran. She commented that, if the reports came only from Catholic sources, they might have something to do with the belief in purgatory, and if only from Lutheran ones, with the fact that they had died unshriven. It is strange that the phenomenon was localised to Germany, and only to the nineteenth century.

So you can make of it what you wish.

CHAPTER 9

The Physics of Phantoms

Of course, the chapter title is not completely accurate; you cannot apply physics to the non-physical. Nevertheless, it does serve to introduce an important subject: an analysis of the characteristics of what are commonly labelled “ghosts”, and how these relate to the world of physical reality.

And I would like to take as a starting point the fact, which has been exemplified again and again in the case histories, that the apparition has been visible to one person and not another, even though it could be shown that it possessed an objective reality. Thus, neither Elke Sommer nor her husband were ever able to see their ghost (there was never any good evidence that there were more than one), but the others who did see it, all independently, all described it in the same way. The apparition of Na Biria was visible to Sir Arthur Grimble, who had never met him before, but not to his companion. Mr. Kirkpatrick was apparently visible only to the landlord, and then only once, but he was able to be identified by old timers. Finally, during his near death experience, Dr. Ritchie was able to see—indeed was shown—innumerable spirits invisible to the living humans they walked among.[lxxii]

From this, I conclude that ghosts are far more common than thought; they might even be all over the place, but the default position is that they are invisible and inaudible. Only under special circumstances, which may or may not be under the conscious control of the ghost, can they be perceived, and some potential witnesses may be more sensitive than others.

On the other hand, the physics of light and optics mean that a material object can be seen by anybody within visual range. When you see, for example, a living human being walk through the door, the light from the sun, moon, or some artificial source reflects from his body. The complex interaction of the light with the object results in the light being reflected at the specific colour wavelength of the object. This reflected light is absorbed by the receptors in your eyes, and interpreted in your brain. The same process occurs for what you might consider an immaterial object, a

hologram. When you look at a hologram, you are actually seeing a solid object, the holographic plate. It is just that the light passing through it, or reflecting from it, produces an optical illusion of a 3D object, just as a mirror produces an optical illusion that you are seeing a room behind the mirror. But, in any case, what is visible to one is visible to all.

A ghost, on the other hand, cannot by operating according to these laws. A working hypothesis would there be that it is as some sort of psychic projection. "Seeing a ghost" would therefore be as much an issue of perception on the part of the witness as a manifestation on the part of the apparition. At this point we need to refer back to Chapters 2 and 3, in which various apparitions were consciously produced by the minds of living persons. Is it possible, therefore, that more common apparitions are produced by the mind of a non-living person, or even a non-human being (as we shall see in later chapters)?

Vague Shapes and Shadows

What are we to make of the "light shadow" seem by Tracey and her friend, and of other vague shapes? I have lost count of how many accounts I have read of mysterious dark shadows moving around. Although this is the sort of thing which makes your blood run cold, I doubt if much of it is in any way sinister. It probably means that the entities are not capable of manifesting themselves completely or, what is probably the same thing, that our psychic senses are not capable of perceiving them fully. The circumstances which allow them to become visible are not fully realised. This would appear to be confirmed by an Englishwoman called Caroline Spencer, who writes:

But lately, I sometimes see a small shadow on top of the stairs when it's late at night. However it's not always a shadow. Its sometimes occurs as a figure of a small girl. You can briefly see what she's wearing and [it] looks like a long dress and a dirty white shirt over the top[lxxiii].

Also, as you will remember from the last chapter, the ghost of the renegade priest was certainly trying to make himself visible. Yet most of the witnesses saw only some sort of vague column of light, and some nothing at all, while only Mrs. Eslinger was able to see him clearly. Significantly, she claimed to have seen ghosts in the past ie she was a sensitive.

Nevertheless, some of them are really weird, such as this one, by a woman (? girl) called Alysen.

My good friend, Faryn just moved into a house in Spokane, Washington. She was text messaging me last night, 11-10-11, when she said to me, “Alysen! There’s something in my room!!!”

Now at first I did not believe her, thinking it was just a prank she was pulling on me, but I was proven to be very wrong. I challenged her and told her to tell me what it looked like. It was a little dark figure huddled in the corner of her room. She also added that her cat was looking at the mysterious figure as well, and by that point I asked her to send me a photo of the “thing in the corner”. She replied with a picture of a little black glowing figure, around a foot and a half tall, slumped over in the corner which was off to the side of her bed. It resembled to me to be a stuffed gorilla or a pair of black boots, but she said she owned neither object.

I asked for, once again, a photo, but this time a close-up of it. I got another photo, an enhanced image of the first one, it appeared to have a visible left ear. She picked up a piece of candy, and attempted to throw the candy at the thing. She did so, and then she frantically text messaged me saying “It vanished! It vanished!!” Then, she told me she had thrown the piece of candy, and right as it hit the huddled figure it let out a screech, like the one one hears when one drags their fingernails on a chalkboard, and disappeared, making the candy hit the wall in back of it. After this occurrence, her cat, Baby, was staring out her open door, looking towards the direction of noises coming from the hallway. Let me note that she was home alone at the time of the occurrence.[lxxiv]

I don’t know what to make of this, and it does not appear to fit the paradigm of what we normally think of as “ghosts”. It may have been innocuous, but in a later chapter we shall describe black figures which appear to be malevolent.

Mirrors

According to tradition, a vampire casts no reflection in a mirror, but this makes no sense. It is an item of folklore which has developed without a proper knowledge of the physics of light. A vampire—again according to tradition—has a perfectly solid body, albeit a dead one. Therefore, if such a thing existed, you should be able to see it in a mirror. A ghost is another

matter. As a psychic projection, it should cast no reflection. But is that the case?

In 1806, a war brought two old friends, Hahn and Kern together in a certain Prussian castle, where they suddenly found themselves in the middle of a serious poltergeist infestation. After three weeks of this, they moved to another chamber, only to have the thumping and the throwing of objects continue. Eventually, at four in the morning, Hahn announced that, noise or no noise, he had to get to sleep. Nevertheless, he continued pacing the floor as Kern began to undress. Suddenly, he saw Kern stand transfixed before a mirror, and begin to tremble violently. As he turned away from the mirror, his face was as white as a sheet.

He then related how, when he had accidentally glanced at the mirror, he had seen a white female form looking out at him. A cloth wrapped over her head left only her facial features exposed, but they were very old and pale, although her expression was indifferent. Hardly being able to believe his eyes, he kept staring at her, but when the eyes of the apparition moved and looked into his, he turned away with a shudder. A notable feature of the apparition was that its image stood before his in the mirror. In other words, if she had been a solid, visible person, she would have been standing between him and the mirror. Hahn then advanced to the mirror and called upon the apparition to show herself, but even though he waited a quarter of an hour, she did nor reappear.[lxxv]

Of course, considering the lateness of the hour, it was possible this was a sleep deprivation hallucination. However, you will remember that the "drowned woman" in Chapter 7 appeared in a mirror. I had read a number of similar accounts. Take, for instance, the story told by a Pakistani woman, Blaze[lxxvi].

When she was twelve, her family moved into a rented house in Rawalpindi. As she stood brushing her hair in the mirror in her room, it seemed that half of the face belonged to her, and half to a man. At first she thought it was due to the distorted shape of the mirror, but then she noticed that, whereas she had long black hair and dark brown eyes, the other side of the face in the mirror possessed short, curly hair, red eyes without pupils, and a beard. She turned and looked at the window behind her, but there was no-one there. Looking back to the mirror, she turned her head side to side. One side of the image was hers, the other something terrible. She screamed and ran outside.

When her mother brought her back, the mirror was normal. But the next day, when she gazed in the mirror, her image changed and a strange man leered out at her. Again she fled. Then their sweeper started complaining of a man following him around. Blaze began seeing the man in every mirror and every glass in the cupboard. The family removed the cupboard, but she still saw the man—the whole figure—in every glass.

Eventually, they put the mirrors back. Her religious leader gave her some verses of the Koran, and told her to face her fears. At first she was too terrified to recite them, but eventually she vowed to do so.

> That day, when I looked in the mirror, that man came and started to come out of it. True to my vow, but terrified, I started reciting the verses. At first he seemed to be growing but then he started getting smaller and then started burning from the feet. As I watched, he burned and vanished and that was the end of the ghost in the mirror.

I have to admit, though, that I have never heard of a case where both a ghost *and* its mirror image are seen at the same time. A psychic projection cannot reflect in a mirror, but it appears that somehow it can be projected onto a mirror.

Photos

It should not be possible to photograph a psychic projection either. In the nineteenth century there was a ready market of "ghost photographs" faked by double exposure, but it is possible not every such photograph is a forgery. The most famous is the 1936 photo of "The Brown Lady of Raynham Hall", depicted on the cover of this book, but originally published in *Country Life* on Boxing Day of that year. And thereby hangs a tale.[lxxvii] Essentially, the Brown Lady had been reputed to have haunted the Norfolk mansion since 1835, and acquired her title from her brown dress ie she has been seen much more clearly than in the photo. In 1936, photographer, Captain Hubert C. Provand and his assistant, Indre Shira were commissioned to take photographs of the mansion. They were just setting up the camera for a second shot of the stairway, when Shira happened to see a vapoury form gradually turning into the shape of a woman. He quickly alerted his boss, who managed to take the crucial photo.

Since then, various theories have been advanced as to how it could have been faked, or even produced accidentally. The consensus is that it was possible, *provided* that both Provand and Shira were lying, because if

their story is correct, it could not be anything else but an apparition. This is not the only purported ghostly photo, of course. You can turn up any number on the internet[lxxviii]. Unfortunately, they all suffer from the same problem: without clear provenance, and a close examination of the negatives, it is not possible to confirm they are genuine. Even if there has been no tampering, there is still the possibility that the "ghost" was a real live person.

At the same time, most of them have never actually been properly investigated and proved to be non-genuine, so it is too early to say, categorically, that an apparition cannot be photographed. Go back to Alysen's story about how her friend sent her digital photos in real time of the strange black apparition. I see no reason to doubt her honesty. Had she been making it up, it would have been easier to say she had had the encounter herself. But if it is true, then it says something about the way these things manifest themselves, but I don't know what it is.

Clothes

What exactly is being seen? The simplistic view is that it is the soul of a deceased person, which somehow has the same shape as its original body. But is it? Can something without a physical substance, such as a soul, have a shape? In any case, based on the evidence of telepathy and tulpas, our working hypothesis is that apparitions are produced by a mind—in this case, the mind of the deceased. Whether the mind is a function of the soul is something we might speculate about, but at least it can be said that it survives death in some form.

But on one thing we may be reasonably certain is that clothes have neither souls or minds. Yet naked ghosts are next to non-existent—at least among those which can be seen clearly ie are not vague shapes or shadows. Do clothes possess some sort of etheric double? If so, then presumably so do all other material objects. Or are the phantom clothes a product of the ghost's imagination? And how are they chosen? They are not necessarily the garments worn at death. A high proportion of the population die in bed, yet very few ghosts are reported wearing pyjamas or night gowns.

An exception, you will remember, was the "drowned woman". I chose it for the catalogue because of a number of unusual features which occasionally turn up individually. One was its appearance in a mirror, another was its night gown. And the third was that, in its initial appearance,

it was soaking wet, with water dripping on the floor. But since there was no reference to a physical puddle left behind, I conclude that the water, like the clothes, was an accessory: part of the psychic projection.

Catherine Crowe heard the following story from the son of the witness, Mr. C., who had been riding up a hill near Edinburgh, when he noticed a close friend of his, also on horseback, behind him. Having slackened his speed in order to allow his friend to catch up, he turned around and discovered that his friend was nowhere to be seen, even though there was no side road into which he could have disappeared. However, the first thing he learned upon returning home, was that his friend had just been killed by his horse falling[lxxix]. So, unless the horse was killed at the same time—which, considering the size of the animal, is unlikely—its image must also have been an accessory of the ghost.

Phantom Sounds

You will have noted several occasions in which an apparition spoke to a witness, or made a noise, especially footsteps. Sound is produced when a solid object vibrates, causing a wave of compression in the air (or water, if the action takes place there), which eventually produces a similar set of compressions in the ear drum, allowing you to hear it. An apparition, or spirit, has no lungs or vocal chords in order to speak—nor, for that matter, ear drums to allow it to hear your reply. Yet, on more than one occasion, witnesses have heard a ghost's voice. It is not stated that they felt the words appear telepathically in their mind; they claim they heard them as sounds. A single report we might put down as a mistake or a lie, but not several independent accounts.

Off hand, I can't remember any case in which the sound was audible to one person but not another. I don't know how many accounts I have read of ghostly footsteps. My initial impression was that footsteps are not heard when an apparition is seen, and vice versa. This is something to consider, but it might be simply a matter of selective perception. After all, when a live human being is present, and moving around, you don't normally pay much attention to his footsteps. You will remember that Christine Jones heard the ghostly chauffeur's footsteps on the stairway before he appeared. Are these sounds merely a psychic projection? In that case, what about the ghost that stumbled when the photographic flash went off? That sort of noise would normally be produced by something solid striking the floor.

Then there was the haunting of Elke Sommer's house, with the sounds of furniture being rearranged although, in fact, nothing was moved. How were these sounds made? Were they just a manifestation of some disembodied mind? It may still be an open question whether an apparition can be photographed, but these sounds were recorded on tape!

The more you observe, the more mysteries you find. Despite the title of this chapter, all we are really doing is delineating the parameters of the mystery.

Phantom Smells

Of course, we all come across strange smells on the odd occasion, but sometimes there appears to be something preternatural about it. Vivienne Rae-Ellis recorded a number of such cases in her 1990 book, *True Ghost Stories of Our Own Time.* One involved a Mr. Paul Helm, who purchased a run-down farmhouse in Lancashire in 1985, and found that it came with a "phantom smoker", which produced the pungent smell of pipe tobacco, without any smoke being present. Interestingly, his wife never smelt it.

What was even more interesting was that, as the book was going to press, the author herself had a similar experience. On Saturday 13 May 1989, she was visiting a friend in an old Elizabethan house near Bristol which she had visited several times before. She was reading in the master bedroom when the aroma of pipe tobacco wafted all around her. No smoke was present, nor was anybody else in the house except her and her friend, neither of whom smoke. Her friend joined her for about twenty minutes, but could smell nothing. Once he had left, she got the impression in her mind's eye of a Victorian gentleman. After another twenty minutes, she left to join her friend in another room. Much to her surprise, the strong smell of tobacco smoke followed her—along the corridor, down the stairs, into the main hall, and up another flight of stairs to where she met her friend. The smell still surrounded her but, although her friend was on the sofa beside her, he smelt nothing.[lxxx]

The following story has nothing whatsoever to do with apparitions or ghosts, but it may reveal something about how such phenomena occur, if we could only disentangle it all. It was told by Bishop Dominic Walker, the exorcist, whom we met in Chapter 7, in an interview with another bishop, Hugh Montefiore. A house was afflicted with a disgusting smell which switched itself on at five o'clock every afternoon and disappeared at seven

o'clock. However, for those two hours it was so foul that the resident couple had to abandon the site for the period. The interesting thing was that whenever a doctor, priest, or any helping agency was present, it didn't occur. So the bishop decided to arrive at six o'clock. No luck. The couple knew he was coming, so "it" didn't show up.

Eventually, the full story came out. The wife had been employed as a cleaner for a students' hostel. However, on her last day there—she refused to go back—she remembered she hadn't cleaned one lavatory because it had been occupied at the time. When she returned, it was still locked. When banging on the door produced no response, she opened it herself with her pass key. A student had hanged himself inside. That was at five o'clock. The police didn't let her go until seven[lxxxi].

Psychokinesis

Psychokinesis is the hypothetical ability to move objects by mental power. In a small number of hauntings, you will recall incidents of small scale physical activity: clothes being thrown around, electrical devices being turned on and off even when unplugged, and the like. In the 1990 movie, *Ghost* the murder victim, played by Patrick Swayze, discovers that, as a ghost, he cannot pick up or move physical objects. A more long term ghost explains to him that he would have to concentrate on its with his mind. It sounds as good an explanation as any.

Phantom Animals

Animals are not supposed to have souls, but not all of them appear to have heard the message. Englishman, Roy Cotterill was tutoring in music a retired policeman called Ian in the latter's home. Ian had already told him he had a cat which was incontinent. So, when he saw a white and tan cat enter the room where he was listening to his pupil's organ work, he attempted to follow the cat, and told his pupil accordingly. The cat was nowhere to be found, although there was nowhere it could have gone. Just then, Ian came in carrying his black cat. Roy told him the cat he had seen was white and tan. "Thank God!" cried his pupil. "Now I know I'm not insane!" Both his wife and his son thought he was crazy because he kept seeing Wellington, their pet who had died six years before.[lxxxii]

Another Englishman, Phillip Evans told how, a few days after having to put down the family's beloved cat, he started seeing it around the house,

even moving the cat flap as it entered. With its colour, a single eye, and a plastic hip, it was unmistakable. He also recalled cycling through Shropshire a few years before, when a large white pony jumped over the fence, hit the road, and disappeared. “It was as if there was a screen halfway across the road; the animal vanished slowly from head to tail.”[lxxxiii]

Vivienne Rae-Ellis has a whole chapter in her book on phantom pets. I shall mention two of the more unusual. The first was told by Mrs. Mena Wade about the time she was employed as a private nurse in the 1930s, although she felt she had to change the names of the others involved. An elderly Miss Anthea had hired her to attend her long time maid, Bella, who was now also both elderly and sick. Mena went upstairs one evening to check on her patient, who was found to be unconscious, but peaceful, with a good pulse. Mena then went downstairs, sat down with the chair backing onto the open door, and started to read. Just then, a strange brown dog entered from behind the chair, walked the length of the room, and disappeared among the floor-length curtains. Mena checked the curtains, but the dog had vanished completely. At that point, she decided to go back and check on her patient. She was dead. Later, when Mena described the dog to her employer, Miss Anthea told her that she had owned such a dog years before, but it had attached itself to Bella, and had been devoted to her. It must have come to see her off[lxxxiv]. And that begs the question: where had it been all those years? Had it been haunting the house unseen?

The second account is, if anything, even stranger[lxxxv]. Mrs. Patricia Fairhurst of Lancashire told her her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Brown (pseudonyms) had a delightful Pekinese dog called Mr. Mobo, who used to stay with the Fairhursts when his owners were on holiday, and he became part of the family. Eventually, the Browns moved to the Isle of Man, and in September of that year, Patricia, her husband, and daughter came to stay with them for ten days. Halfway through, the Browns went on holidays themselves, leaving the Fairhursts to house sit for them.

As soon as Patricia entered the house, Mr. Mobo came running up in his usual ecstatic manner to greet her. She stroked him and patted his head. For the next ten days, the little Pekinese followed her everywhere. He sat next to her on the settee, and she stroked his soft, silky fur. He followed her into the garden. Whenever they went out, he was sad, and whenever they returned, he was excited. The strange thing was Patricia was the only one who could see him, or feel him, because they all knew he had died several

years ago, and been buried in the garden under a little headstone *in England*. When the Browns moved to the Isle of Man, the ghost of their little dog must have gone with them, just like Hannah went on holiday with Betty Hill and her sister.

Finally: the apparition of a living dog. You will remember Hahn and Kern of the poltergeist castle, and the image in the mirror. A certain white greyhound called Flora had formed an attachment for Hahn, so when he was returning to the castle, and he heard the footsteps of a dog behind him, he immediately called Flora by name. There was nothing there—although the sound of footsteps continued. Then, when he reached his destination and began opening the door, Kern at once saw Flora so close behind him that she was half way through the door. Afraid that Hahn would close it on her, Kern immediately pulled the door right open, and called Flora by name. At that, she vanished. After a search, the found the dog locked up in a stable, and she had not been out all day[lxxxvi].

What does this all mean? You will see that animal apparitions follow the same rules as those of humans: they are psychic projections. So instead of inquiring about unknowable matters, such as the soul, we should consider something more easily grasped: the mind or intelligence. The minds and intelligence of the higher mammals are functionally similar to those of humans, but at a much more rudimentary level. Perhaps that is why apparitions of animals are several orders of magnitude rarer than those of humans. Spiritualists and psychic researchers talk about "the survival of the personality"—as if we had nothing to look forward to but merely surviving. Perhaps in order to continue after physical death and project itself psychically, an animal's mind must be sufficiently sophisticated to produce a coherent personality and identity.

Perhaps, too, only a human with some emotional connection with animals can perceive it. Animal apparitions are invariably of pets, though not necessarily those of the witness. To be sure, in the wilderness you probably couldn't tell a phantom animal from a real one. But what about zoos? They possess lots of animals with even more sophisticated brains than cats and dogs, plus keepers with a strong rapport with them. But you never hear of haunted zoos.

CHAPTER 10

So What Are They?

This world is a bridge. Pass over it; but do not build your dwelling there. Inscription on the gate of the mosque at Fatehpur-Sikri, 1601, and incorrectly attributed to Jesus.

People seem to want to put everything into boxes, even things they do not believe in. Thus, you will hear people reject the existence of UFOs because the distance between the stars is too far for alien spaceships to cross. It doesn't occur to them that they have merely refuted, at least to their own satisfaction, one theory of what UFOs might be. They still haven't addressed the issue of whether UFOs exist ie whether there are any objects which both fly and are unknown.

Likewise, people have a fixed idea of what ghosts might be. A psychiatrist once explained to me why he didn't believe in them: "What I can't understand is why, if everyone becomes a ghost, the world isn't full of them." Well, for a start, he is making two assumptions, which may not necessarily be correct.

- That everyone becomes a ghost. But perhaps only a tiny proportion are able to, want to, or are forced to manifest in this manner.
- That anyone becomes a ghost. It assumes that ghosts are disembodied souls. But what is they are something else?

Let us examine the second possibility first. Observing that so many alleged ghosts are endlessly repeating the same actions, some researchers have suggested that they do not represent any sort of personality at all, but some sort of psychic newsreel being played over and over again. I have already mentioned in Chapter 4 that the horses and drivers in the phantom funeral procession seen by Mrs. Taylor's mother must have all died separately. There are many other examples.

For six years during the 1990s Grant Hudson used to work as a sound engineer in the old, now demolished Wellington Theatre at Great Yarmouth in Norfolk. It was, according to him, a spooky place when you were by yourself, and the auditorium had a "most unnerving atmosphere". Anyhow,

he once accepted the task of staying overnight to keep an eye on some expensive equipment, because there had been a number of recent break-ins. After securing the place and turning off all the electrics, he lay down to sleep on a sofa near the front doors. Suddenly, he was awakened by a loud banging. The doors of the bar area were swinging wildly, and banging, while a light was coming from the auditorium.

Had someone broken in? With his heart in his mouth, he headed for the main auditorium and passed the stairs leading to the upper seating tier. Light was pouring down the stairs. Not only that, but from the auditorium issued the sound of an out-of-tune piano and falsetto female singing. Just as he grasped the handle of the last set of double doors, the whole auditorium burst into applause and cheers. He knew what a full house sounded like, and this was it. Opening the doors a few inches, he was able to a male pianist and a female singer—he gave descriptions—accepting the applause. All he could remember of the audience was their slicked back hair and tall hats. Not only that, but the auditorium was fitted with ornamental Victorian gas lamps, which had been left as a talking point, although no longer connected to gas, but that night they were blazing full on. He turned and got out of that place as fast as his little legs could carry him, not even pausing to lock the front door.[lxxxvii]

Now, it is one thing to acknowledge the existence of ghosts, but I consider it a bridge too far to imagine that a whole theatre full of ghosts, all of whom had passed away at different times and places, had got together for a ghostly concert, complete with a ghostly piano. It is far more likely that some real event in the past had been recorded and played back by some means beyond the knowledge of modern science.

In her compilation, *True Ghost Stories of Our Own Time*, Vivienne Rae-Ellis recorded a number of such incidents, although they were not grouped into a unit, but scattered throughout the text as just “ordinary” ghost encounters. She apparently did not see the incongruity of several “ghosts” appearing at once. Such were the procession of six black cars each carrying a bride and groom (p 8), a whole regiment of men in crusader costumes (p 20), the voices of many children singing in the top story of a house (pp 107-8), and chanting in a chapel (pp 167-8). All this appears to tie in with another, less well documented phenomenon: time slips, in which a person feels he has temporarily entered a scene from the past, or the past has temporarily surrounded him. In fact, Mrs. Rae-Ellis did record a

number of incidents of what she called “timewarps”, one of which involved a road suddenly turning into a track where a highway robbery was taking place (pp 15-17).

Many cases are open to this interpretation: for example, when the “ghost” does nothing but repeat the same actions over and over again, or even just sits or stands there, doing nothing at all. Even so, caution is needed. After all, the ghost that stumbled would have fitted into that category, if Harry Price and his friend hadn’t caused it to stumble.

Nevertheless, it is clear that a lot of ghostly activity is indicative of intelligence. Admittedly, the intelligence level might not be very high, but it does reveal a tendency to make decisions or determine actions eg Na Biria walking to the Place of Dread, the major heading for his original rendezvous, the sound of moving furniture, which ceased as soon as someone entered the room. Furthermore, in some cases the apparition could definitely be identified as a recently deceased person. All this is indicative of a mind which has survived, to some extent, physical death. The traditional interpretation of a ghost as the disembodied soul of a dead person appears to be correct.

But, again, it is important not to put them into boxes constructed by tradition. Whenever a place gains a reputation of being haunted, a legend soon springs up of some murder, suicide, or other tragedy to explain it. Unless there is some solid documentation of such an event, along with a close temporal connection with the first appearance of the ghost, we should ignore it. Likewise, when, for example, we are told that the Brown Lady of Raynham Hall is Lady Dorothy Walpole, we are bound to ask: how do they know? Did anybody see the ghost close up and was able to compare it to a portrait of Lady Dorothy? And why was the first sighting 109 years after her death?

We also hear simplistic questions like: why aren’t battlefields and concentration camps haunted? Why should they be? Why would any ghost want to hang around either place, assuming he had any choice in the matter? I’ve heard of haunted prisons, because many of the long term convicts have essentially made their home there; they have become institutionalised. But a concentration camp? Also, it has been suggested that many of those who die violently or suddenly do not know, or cannot come to terms with, the fact that they are dead. But even if that were true, it might not be the case if the victim has been heading for a place where there was a

strong expectation of being killed, like a battlefield or the scaffold. It also might not be the case if he suddenly finds himself in the midst of a host of similarly affected victims.

The plain fact, which we have to accept, is that we have no way of knowing what produces a ghost and the nature of their ghostly existence. We can only speculate. We might ask, what did Na Biria do when he finally reached the Place of Dread? Or the major when he reached the boat? Did they stay around, or did they move on to the next stage of existence? Perhaps some people, in the immediate aftermath of death, feel the need to "touch base" with their friends or relatives before leaving the earth forever. But it is clear that many hang around for an indefinite period of time, producing a "haunting". Why?

In one of the Harry Potter books, the ghost tells Harry that he is doomed to haunt the halls of Hogwarts because, on finding himself dead, was afraid to move "on" to the next phase. Well, that is as good an hypothesis as any. Another idea you hear bandied around is that they remain earthbound because they have "unfinished business" down here. Maybe. But one might consider that this "unfinished business" might amount to simply worldly living. In the opinion of Catherine Crowe, a lot depends on whether the individual's thoughts and affections point him upwards or downwards.

It is surely absurd to expect that because our bodies have decayed and fallen away, or been destroyed by an accident, that a miracle is to be wrought in our favor, and that the miser's love of gold, or the profligate's love of vice, is to be immediately extinguished …[lxxxviii]

However, those are just major sins. There are many more worldly concerns which might hold a person to his earthly life: career, hobbies, causes, even relationships. The Muslim aphorism cited at the beginning on this chapter is certainly not a genuine quote of Jesus, but it is nevertheless profound: treat this earthly life as a bridge, and do not build your dwelling there. The things of this world must pass away; they are there to be enjoyed, but you must not set your heart upon them.

Fictional ghosts, such as in Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*, or later movies like *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*, or *Beetlejuice*, are portrayed as possessing the same intelligence, emotions, and motives as in their former life. But that is not the impression you get from anecdotes of haunting which have any claim to plausibility. There exists an earlier opinion. I have

an amateur interest in anthropology, and I have noted that one of the most common primitive beliefs about the afterlife is that familiar from the early Greek myths ie the shades of the dead are not spirits liberated from the frailties of the flesh, but mere shadows of their former selves, the pathetic remnants of humanity, as incapable of rising to full human emotions as they are of bodily functions. Doesn't this sound a little closer to what we encounter in ghostly anecdotes? Perhaps the old pagans were on to something.

When plausible anecdotes of ghostly encounters are examined, their most obvious feature consists of stereotyped, repetitive activities—reminiscent more of a caged animal's pacing or a rat running on a wheel than of fulfilling behaviour. The situation is probably far worse, if my hypothesis is correct that these psychic projections are only occasionally perceptible. Mr. Kirkpatrick, aged 85 or 105, claimed to have taken the same walk every day, but only one person saw him, and only once. Is he still doing it? The ghost that stumbled was stomping the same route over and over again. How long had he been doing it before living people were able to hear it? How long did he continue? What about the pointless (apparent) moving of furniture by the ghost in Elke Sommer's house? And all too often, the ghost appears to be bound to a particular place: a specific house, even a specific hotel room. All this is suggestive of a disintegrating personality, one winding down, or turning in on itself. It must be awful being a ghost.

I cannot resist the conclusion that these are damned souls—fortunate that they are not somewhere worse, but trapped in a decaying half-life by their inordinate attachment to this transitory world.

Essentially, we are permitted two glimpses of the afterlife: near death experiences and ghosts. The former are usually, but not invariably, positive, the latter almost invariably negative.

But at least we are dealing with a human reality. In the rest of this volume we shall examine beings which are definitely not supposed to exist.

PART III

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

CHAPTER 11

I Never Used to Believe in Fairies, but …

This happened in Australia in the (southern) spring of 1954. Miss Marjorie A. Thompson and two of her friends, Barbara Diprose and Jill Traralgon spent some of their holidays with Miss Thompson's parents in Gippsland, Victoria and took a sightseeing trip to the temperate rainforest national park of Bulga Park. They crossed a swing bridge over a deep gully of tree ferns, strolled off the beaten path in search of unusual wild flowers, and came to a small clearing covered in bracken fern about three inches high. Just then, all three of them simultaneously saw three Aborigines emerge from the far side of the clearing, and begin to speak to each other, although the women could not hear what was being said. At this point I would like to explain to non-Australians that white settlement in Victoria was particularly intense, and completely devastated the indigenous population. By the 1950s there were no—repeat, no—traditional tribal Aborigines in Victoria, although there were various mixed blood communities scattered around the state on the fringe of society. These, however, were clearly tribal Aborigines. They were clad in only a piece of bark each, while two carried woomeras, or spear-throwers (but no spears), and the other a didgeridoo, or drone pipe. I'm surprised at this, because it is a north Australian, not Victorian instrument. Also, not many white people had even heard about a didgeridoo in 1954. The Aborigines then went back into the ferns, the taller of the two woomera holders retiring by himself. But the really amazing thing was that they were only nine inches high.

This was reported to Marjorie T. Johnson, whom we will meet later, in a letter dated November 1955, little more than a year after the event[lxxxix]. I like it. Children's books about Australian fairies almost invariably show them as white, but I always thought they should be black and wear loin cloths.

If a grown-up believes in fairies, we think he is childish, but do children really believe in fairies? Well, I used to believe in the tooth fairy, but I gave up on her when I got my last threepence for my last baby tooth.

(Santa Claus kept my loyalty a bit longer.) But otherwise, I put fairies into the same basket as dragons (which used to give me the heebie-jeebies) and clothed, talking animals. They were "just stories". When a school play involved the interactions of an old lady with fairies, I thought it was weird, because there were no such things as fairies. Even in fiction they only belonged in fantastic settings such as those of Perrault's or Grimm's fairy tales, not in any sort of "realistic" stories.

But in our house lay a 1144-page tome pretentiously entitled, *The Great Encyclopædia of Universal Knowledge*, apparently published in 1938, and the constant literary companion of my boyhood. Indeed, several of the front and rear pages have been seriously damaged by the caresses of my childish fingers. It was here that I discovered the following entry:

Belief in fairies, in one form or another, is found all over the world, but is strongest among primitive peoples. It is presumably as old as mankind itself, and in Christian communities is one of the surviving relics of paganism.

That was the first time I had heard that there were grown-ups who genuinely believed in fairies. Later, in my twenties, after I had followed my contemporaries' example and read Tolkien, I decided to educate myself on the complex and detailed mythology relating to fairies in Europe.[xc] As it turned out, when folklorists were researching fairy traditions in the British Isles during the nineteenth, and even twentieth centuries, they found people who not only believed in them, but also claimed to have seen them. Of course, they might have been making it up. Indeed, that is the only view you could take if you have already ruled out the existence of fairies. Now, I'm not saying that doesn't happen, but there is a certain fragility in any theory—such as the non-existence of something—which relies on the assumption that every piece of evidence to the contrary must be based on a lie.

Nor is this tradition extinct. As recently as 2020, an application to build a twelve cage salmon farm off the coast of Skye in Scotland was rejected for valid ecological reasons, as well as the effect on commercial fishermen, but the Council's planning committee also received a letter "on behalf of the Flodigarry fairies."[xci] It claimed that the area was inhabited by *ashrai*, or sea fairies, which come to the surface every hundred years, but that the cages would likely draw them to the surface, where they would melt. It was also possible that the ashrai would lure workmen to their death

by promises of gold and jewels. It turns out that similar beliefs were, or are, present in Shropshire, Cheshire, and the Welsh borderland.[xcii]

Nowadays, the last major stronghold of such traditions in western Europe is Iceland, where they are taken seriously by a large enough minority to require a special government body (to deal with the sort of objections the Scottish fish farm received). In fact, in 2010, after an Icelander called Árni Johnsen survived a car crash, he suspected he had been saved by elves dwelling in a 30 ton boulder next to the accident site. An elf specialist examined the boulder and discovered three generations of elves living inside. He thereupon moved the huge rock to his own property. And he was a Member of Parliament![xciii]

Human beings are highly imaginative, of course, but there are only a limited possible permutations on the human form. Giants and folk with heads like dogs or lions obviously don't exist anywhere near us, so they must be attributed to distant lands. The wild man—the human who lives like an animal—can be placed in the depths of the poorly accessible wilderness. But miniature humans are unobtrusive enough to be conceived of as dwelling close by, and perhaps that is why they have been invented by so many different societies.

One of the drawbacks of studying the genuine fairy mythology is that I can no longer tolerate the prettified, gossamer-winged monstrosities of children's books. It is true that belief in fairies, like belief in witches, is a holdover from paganism. Norse mythology recognized two classes. The light elves, bright and beautiful, and well disposed to mankind, live in Álfheimr ("elf home") under the god Freyr, while the dark elves, ugly, long-nosed, and dirty brown in colour, dwell in crevices and caves, for they will turn to stone if struck by the sun's beams. In the beginning, the gods, Odin, Vili, and Vé slew the giant, Ymir and used his body to make the world. From his skull they made the sky, from his blood the sea, and from his hair the trees. And from the maggots which bred on his carcass they made the dark elves. Ugly the dark elves may be, but they are skilful. For their master, Freyr they made the ship, *Skíðblaðnir*, which was large enough to carry all the gods, but which could be folded up to fit in a pocket.

Of course, the modern Icelandic legend is that, when God paid a visit to our first parents, Eve hid away the large number of her offspring she hadn't had time to wash. For this, God turned them into elves. Since the elves are blessed with a more pleasant life than mortals, perhaps that wasn't

such a spiteful act on the part of the Almighty after all. In the British Isles, the fairies are more often thought of as fallen angels, not good enough for heaven, or bad enough for hell.

Before we continue, a few words on terminology may be in order. “Fairy” is a word of French origin, and is the exact equivalent of the native English “elf”. Both are generic terms for all these intermediate spirits which are neither angel nor devil. The generic term for specifically evil or malevolent fairies is “goblin”. A bewildering variety of subspecies of these beings are recorded. Some have entered popular culture, such as the Irish leprechauns and the Cornish piskies, or pixies. In the border country of Scotland and England some farmers are lucky enough to attract a brownie, who will come at night and do all the work the hired hands had neglected: reap, mow, thresh, herd the sheep, and even run errands. Don’t you wish one of those would visit your place?

Of course, it goes without saying that, when you cross the Channel to continental Europe, you find even more geographic variation in the fairies. Due to the Harry Potter books, readers are becoming acquainted with the incredibly beautiful Balkan nymphs known as *vili*. Scandinavia has its trolls, and everyone knows that Germany is the homeland of the dwarfs: bearded, wizened denizens of the earth the size of a two year old child. However, since the invention of certain garden ornaments, they have been confused with gnomes. Gnomes have nothing to do with the fairy tradition, but everything to do with a medieval pseudoscience with saw all matter as consisting of four elements: fire, water, air, and earth. Each of these elements possessed an elemental spirit, respectively salamanders, nereids or undines, sylphs, and gnomes. As earth elementals, gnomes could move through rock as we do through air. Not even dwarfs could do that!

The fundamental nature of the fairies is contradictory—or perhaps the countless authors of the tradition never thought it out properly. Fairies are conceived of as spirits, and so essentially immortal—but only as long as this world lasts. On the Day of Judgment they will be consigned to oblivion; without (earthly) bodies, they cannot take part in the general resurrection, and they cannot go to heaven, poor things! Ironically, however, every fairy anecdote implies that they possess solid bodies. Nor is this a temporary characteristic; no-one ever mentions their being seen to materialise or dematerialised, or imply that it is possible.

As for their appearance, how can one be specific about beings who are expert shape-shifters and masters of illusion? Some are as tall as humans, and have been known to marry them—but these marriages always fail, because the two species are incompatible. A few are as tiny as ants, but heights ranging from six inches to two feet are more common. Some, especially those of the "fairy bride" category, are more beautiful than any human being; others are grotesque and hideous. They do *not* have wings. Definitely not! This is a literary device dating from the late nineteenth century, but no genuine believer in the fairy tradition ever mentioned them.

Nor do they wield magic wands. But they do tend to prefer primary colours on their clothing.

Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather![xciv]

They also prefer to come out at night, rather than during the daylight hours, and at special days in the years, but these rules are not invariable. Some of them dwell in the trees, at the bottom of lakes, or in the sea, but most reside in an underground world accessible through portals such as ancient heathen burial mounds, and it is as rich, glamorous, and exotic as you would expect a fairyland to be. An unusual feature of Fairyland, however, is that time passes much faster than on the surface. A mortal may spend what appears to be a day down there and return to find that a year has passed. But those who eat the food of Fairyland will never return at all.

The fairies are magical creatures, and the most common manifestation of their magic is "glamour", or illusion, which allows them to walk invisible among us, or to make a hovel appear as a palace, and vice versa, or an adult fairy as a human child. But there exists a magic ointment which, rubbed on the eyes of a mortal, allows them to see through fairy glamour. They can disorient humans, so that the "pixy led" victim wanders erratically, unable to find his way. A high form of magic allows them to turn leaves and stones into gold, and Bottom's head into that of an ass, while inflicting illness on humans or blight on crops, as well as producing good luck. But it has its limits; iron is proof against fairy magic. Iron, in fact, is kryptonite to fairies.

What about their relations with mortals? Of course, there are no fairy godmothers; they are outcast spirits who fear the things of God, and would

be quite out of place in a Christian ceremony. Many of them play pranks on humans, and some are downright malicious, but some can be generous and friendly—witness the brownies. They may also marry humans. Sometimes they make arrangements with their human neighbours. They sometimes need our food, or our midwives. On the negative side, they have been known to kidnap women to serve as wet nurses for their own children. They also steal unbaptized children and replace them with one of their own, or a decrepit old fairy made by glamour to appear as a baby. Deformed, mentally retarded, or autistic children were often accused of being such "changelings". What happens to the mortal child taken in return is not recorded.

One almost invariable aspect of fairy morality is that they do not tell lies, or break their promises. However, they are adept as talking around the truth, making statements which are literally true, but misleading, and keeping the exact words of a promise, while betraying the intent. To be fair, they do this mostly when humans are trying to take unfair advantage of them. You might note that this custom is observed by spirits even lower in the moral hierarchy, even the Devil. I suspect that, like the supernatural lapse of time in Fairyland, it has achieved such a prominent place in folklore because it produces such really good stories.

Dealing with powerful, magical beings is fraught with peril. Their gratitude and their vengeance are out of all proportion to the service or offence offered. But their most problematic aspect is their capriciousness, and their sheer alien nature. You never know when an idle word or a simple false step will bring their ill will down upon you.

This, then, is the tradition which folklorists were collecting in the nineteenth and even the twentieth centuries while authors were creating the saccharine winged tinkerbelles which clog up children's literature. When you read the genuine stories, they at first sound charming, but pretty soon they become sinister. You realise that the world would be a very disturbing place if they really existed.

But what if they do?

You would be absolutely amazed at how many people claim to have seen fairies. To be sure, it is only a fraction of those who claim to have seen a ghost, or a flying saucer. I can even produce more alleged witnesses to a bigfoot than a fairy. But these are, so to speak, mainstream paranormal.

Fairies are beyond the pale. If you saw one, would you report it to the local newspaper? Would you tell your friends? Not if you knew what "laughing stock" means! But the witnesses under discussion do not hail from remote, backward rural areas where such beliefs are still form part of popular culture. For the most part, they are ordinary people who would be taken seriously if they reported something more mundane. Usually, they never believed in fairies before. Often they didn't even use the word to describe it. So how do we explain their testimonies?

Misinterpretation or Faulty Memories? Haven't we all had the experience of seeing a picture or a scene, or listening to a song, after a long interval, and finding it was somewhat different from how we remembered it? Although some events are so dramatic they stick permanently in our memory, it is important to understand that your memory is not a DVD player. Every time you access it, you have to reassemble it, with the possibility that it will lose or gain something in the process. Often, our memories adjust to how we would have preferred the event to have occurred—particularly when it involves conflict with other people. One must assume that some of the details will become scrambled. But what about the core experience?

Suppose you briefly notice something big in the forest. Was it a bigfoot? Or something strange in the sky: a flying saucer, perhaps? If your mind is that way inclined, your memory can focus, and perhaps elaborate, on those features which would tend to support the hypothesis, while forgetting those which did not. Eventually you will be able to convince yourself you really saw a bigfoot or flying saucer, but your memory is really "fake news". A more banal solution may have been available.

But stop and think: the reason a person might imagine he had seen a bigfoot or flying saucer is that these are, so to speak, respectable things to see, even if he did not believe in them at first. But little men are not. Nobody's supposed to see such things. If one were seen, the tendency would be to rationalise it as something else. In fact, in one case the witnesses initially thought they were looking at a doll—until it moved, and other witnesses declared that, initially, they thought they were seeing was a squirrel.

Hallucinations? As I explained in Chapter 1, healthy people, not under the influence of drugs, do not have visual hallucinations. The major exception involves sleep. All sorts of strange occurrences mark the

boundaries between sleep and wakefulness: night terrors, hypnagogic hallucinations (weird images seen on the approach of sleep) and hypnopompic hallucinations (coming out of sleep). I am always suspicious of apparitions reported under such circumstances. The witness might state, "I am sure I was not asleep/dreaming", but I am seldom so sure. (But in some cases they are certainly correct.) A work mate of mine told me how, as a boy, he one night saw a troop of tiny, winged, luminous beings. But who knows what was happening in his brain at the time?

Dreams—at least the ones we remember—are produced during so-called REM (rapid eye movement) sleep which, as its name implies, is characterized by the eyes moving rapidly under the eyelids. Initially, it was thought that they were following the movements of a dream, but this is no longer believed to be the case. The important thing about REM sleep is that it is very deep, and the body is immobile, paralysed. But strange things can occur if it gets out of synch with consciousness. An Englishwoman, Esma Pearcey remembered how, as a fashion student in London in 1997, she went to sleep in the afternoon, and woke up when the sunlight moved across the room and fell on her. Her eyes were open and her conscious mind working normally, when she saw a horribly shaped, six inch long fly buzzing around the room. To her horror, she realised that it was going to land on her face, and she could not move a muscle. As her terror mounted, her conscious mind clicked in and told her she was in the middle of a lucid dream, and her paralysis was a normal part of it. Immediately, both fly and paralysis vanished.[xcv]

That was a pretty typical example, but what we to make of the following? Englishman, John Burke was the middle of three children. As he explained, when he was aged four, they lived in a five story building with a basement entered by a trapdoor. He and his little sister were forbidden to enter it because its steps were considered unsafe but, in any case, the trapdoor was too heavy for them to open. However, one day he was sitting on the stairs about six feet from the entrance to the basement when he saw the trapdoor begin to open. Just then, he became paralysed. Unable to speak or move, he watched as, out of the basement, climbed an elflike creature as tall as he was, dressed in green and brown, and wearing a pointed hat.

The creature sat down beside him and spoke in a "strange clicking and whistling language" which he could not understand. Somehow, however, he gained the impression that its name was Frick Frick. Finally, the creature

returned to the basement and, as soon as the trapdoor was shut, the paralysis left him, and he was able to go about his normal life.

Child specialists will tell you that few people remember anything earlier than their third birthday, and I think most of us possess only fragmentary memories of the time before we went to school, which was the first major change in our lives. If this were a one-off, I would consider it a product of a little boy's imagination, probably inaccurately remembered as an adult. However, it turns out the experience was repeated many times over the next three or four years—always in the same place, with the same paralysis, and Frick Frick always doing nothing but talk in his strange language, occasionally tapping him on the arm. Master Burke was no longer afraid. The end came when he was eight years old, and the family moved to a new residence, leaving Frick Frick behind.

In the years since then [he added], I have spoken about Frick Frick to both my brother and sister. Neither of them remember being visited by Frick Frick, but my brother, who is two years older than me, remembers often seeing me sitting on the stairs by the trap door just staring into the distance as though in a trance.[xcvi]

I wonder if his brother remembered the trap door being open during these "trance" phases.

I am going to invoke Occam's razor and assume that this was a psychological, rather than a paranormal phenomenon. But I would be more comfortable if it had happened in the bedroom. Did the little boy somehow have a waking dream on the stairs near the trapdoor and if so, how, why, and with what predisposing conditions? And did that vivid experience somehow cause him to lapse into the same state at other times when he was in the same place? It is all very weird. However, none of the stories you are about to read are as ambiguous as that.

Hoaxes? This is the place to fulfil the promise in Chapter 1 to detail the methods required to weed out hoaxes when dealing with fantastic stories. There is no hundred percent guarantee of success, of course. Any individual account could be a hoax, even if the reporter sounds completely sincere, even if he has nothing to gain and everything to lose by lying. But, once more, it is the numbers which count. The idea is to cull out all those with a high level of unreliability, leaving a select group which can at least be taken seriously. Of these, some will most likely be false, but the aggregate of data should stand up.

The two chief motives for hoaxing are fun and profit. The second can be ignored in this instance; there is no money to be gained in inventing fairy anecdotes. As far as fun goes, the most obvious is the desire to pull a fast one over an "expert". Qualified zoologists, researching ordinary wildlife, have occasionally had laymen deliberately feed them misinformation, just for the fun of it. The temptation is even greater if the the so-called expert is peddling an idea well out of the mainstream. Thus, if I were to give a speech on the current subject to a large audience, I could almost guarantee somebody would say to himself: "This jackass really believes this nonsense. I think I'll feed him a wild one and see if he bites." I have run across this problem in my investigations into mystery animals. One man told a friend of mine, in great detail, and with every impression of sincerity, of multiple interactions with a yowie—the Australian equivalent of the bigfoot—in an urbanised little peninsula of Sydney where, quite simply, such a large animal could not possibly exist. I have also heard other stories which, although I cannot absolutely affirm their impossibility, nevertheless bear all the indications of someone stretching the truth to its very limits.

Of course, for the proper effect, the hoaxer should be describing the event by word of mouth, so that he can watch the victim nodding in agreement while he is spinning his lies or, if on the telephone, listen to the affirmation in his tone of voice. There is not much fun in writing a letter and never knowing whether the victim took it seriously.

Back in 1960 there were reports of mysterious creatures in the waters adjacent to my home city of Brisbane, Queensland. So at one point, a local newspaper, the *Sunday Truth* asked if any of its readers had seen a "monster" in the countryside. At that, the jokers came out. Scores of people sent in fantastic, over-the-top, tall stories, all different from each other. Inserted among them were a few brief accounts which might have been genuine, but by and large, it was perfectly clear that none of it was intended to be taken seriously.

Jokes which are intended to be taken seriously, however, take a different form. The object is to make the story just slightly plausible, so that a few people will believe it, but still so fantastic that others can recognize it as a hoax, and the perpetrator can stand around with his friends at the pub and have a laugh together. Hoaxes like this are relatively easy to detect. Also, they typically appear after one or two more reasonable reports. In other words, if there has been a couple of reports of (say) UFOs or bigfoots

in the press, it inspires someone to throw in the tall story and see if it is accepted. However, the earlier reports were probably sincere.

These days stories of paranormal encounters are published on internet chat rooms, and one would expect that the opportunity for hoaxing occurs there as well. But, again, the object of the hoaxer would have to be to go one better than the other contributors. Suppose, for example, you were reading a collection of ghost stories on a chat room, and decided this was all a load of rubbish, and you might as well have a bit of fun with them. The solution would be to write some fictitious account which would be plausible to many of those who accepted the other stories, but nevertheless over the top. There is not much point in writing a story just like all the others.

I might add, that when my book, *Bunyips and Bigfoots, in search of Australia's mystery animals* was published, I received lots of correspondence saying, in effect, "I had an experience just like the ones you mentioned." There were no over the top ones at all.

But if there is one thing you should not do if you want a bit of fun, is go to the press and announce that you saw a fairy. A bigfoot or lake monster, certainly; someone is bound to take you seriously. But tell them you saw a fairy, and you'll become a laughing stock. From this, you might deduce that the person who makes such a report must be sincere. But you never know. Decades ago, a woman in the Philippines claimed to have given birth to a fish. The world is full of weirdos and idiots, and some of them fail to distinguish fifteen minutes of fame from fifteen days of ridicule. It is always a good idea to investigate the alleged witness, and see whether he or she is known to be of good character and sound mind.

A special case arises when the alleged witness is a child because, although children have a vivid imagination, they do not understand adults' criteria for credibility. For this reason, they can produce a hoax, but not maintain it. When interrogated by formidable authority figures, such as parents, teachers, or police, they will do one of two things: either they will break down and confess, or they will produce a flight of fancy which gives the whole game away. The same applies even more strongly if several children are involved. It is hardly likely that a group of kids would conspire together to make up a story to fool the grown-ups, and that none of them would subsequently break ranks.

In point of fact, it is rare for encounters with fairies to be reported to the press. Both genuine witnesses and hoaxers are too smart for that.

Nevertheless, a person who has had a bewildering experience will be burdened with the need to make sense of it, and so will be inclined to volunteer the information to anyone who is prepared to take it seriously, irrespective of whether it fits that person's field of research. Thus, encounters with fairies, and with apparitions even stranger and more disturbing, tend to be told to researchers into ghosts. The witness may not even think of his encounter in terms of fairies. But in the days before the internet, finding such a willing listeners was not easy. Nevertheless, the telephone directories of most big cities would possess an entry for "UFO" or "flying saucer". And since ufologists tend to be interested in the unusual and bizarre, their societies usually end up with a loose file of weirdness which doesn't obviously relate to the subject at hand. And, realistically, if a joker wanted to have a bit of fun at their expense, he would more likely tell a tall tale of a flying saucer and a conversation with its pilot, rather than picking a little man out of a puddle, which is one of the cases to be recorded here.

These, then, are the sort of matters which a sensible researcher must bear in mind when considering the truthfulness of an alleged witness.

A dozen years ago I would have said I do not believe in fairies. I still don't, in the sense that they carry the heavy baggage of folklore. So let's just call them "Little People", and leave their nature as an open question. By now the evidence has accumulated to the point where it can no longer be ignored. Others have investigated it before me. Janet Bord, for example, did it the hard way, searching through obscure literature by hand for her book in 1997[xcvii]. However, I shall not steal her thunder, and duplicate her case histories except where I have located them independently. Likewise, the collections published on the internet[xcviii], though no doubt well researched, usually fail to provide the original citation, so I shall not, generally, use them.

Nevertheless, since this is a subject completely alien to our modern belief system, it is right that the evidence presented be comprehensive. I trust that the following chapters will satisfy that criterion.

CHAPTER 12

A Worldwide Phenomenon

I am told to my surprise that there are people who have never seen a goblin. One cannot help feel sorry for such people. I am sure there must be something wrong with their eyesight.

Axel Munthe

Yes, Dr. Munthe, I do feel sorry for myself. I have seen three UFOs. I won't call them flying saucers, let alone alien spacecraft, but they were never identified, were certainly flying, and were presumably objects[xcix]. But paranormal entities, be they goblins or ghosts, have never crossed my visual field. I feel left out.

On the other hand, Axel Munthe (1857—1949) lived a very eventful life, and it is probable that his 1929 mémoires, *The Story of San Michele* has never been out of print. And in Chapter 15, he described one of his more interesting experiences, which allegedly occurred at place called Forsstugan in Swedish Lapland. He gone to bed in a room over a cow-stable, illuminated by a tallow candle on a table, when he heard something rattle on the table. The tallow candle was just flickering out, so he deduced that he had slept for a while (a significant comment). But in the flickering light he saw a little grey-haired man no bigger than the palm of his hand pulling at his watch chain and listening to the ticking. When he at last noticed Dr. Munthe, he dropped the watch chain, glided down the table leg, sailor fashion, and raced towards the door.

In the preface to his book, he avowed the truth of the story. Nevertheless, in the relevant chapter, he elaborated by claiming that he spoke to the goblin, and used the alleged conversation as a literary device to describe the unusual events of his childhood. So we shall simply leave it at that.

Perhaps we might prefer to turn to a more famous figure, one not known for romancing the facts: the Rev. Sabine Baring-Gould (1834—1924), clergyman, archaeologist, folklorist, novelist, short story writer, and father of fifteen. These days he is remembered mostly as the author of

"Onward, Christian Soldiers" and *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, but in his time he was up there with Andrew Lang, Thomas Carlyle, and other prominent Victorian men of letters. And in 1890 he wrote *In Troubadour-Land, a ramble in Provence and Languedoc*[c]. As he had travelled there both as an adult and as a child, after describing an area known as the Crau, he introduced an anecdote from his childhood. We shall take it up from pages 65 and 66.

> When I was a child of five years *[1839]* my father's carriage with post horses was crossing the Crau. It was in summer. I sat on the box with my father and looked at the postilions. Presently I saw a number of little figures of men with peaked caps running about the horses and making attempts to scramble up them. I said something about what I saw, whereupon my father stopped the carriage and put me inside with my mother. The heat of the sun on my head, he concluded, had produced these illusions. For some time I continued to see these dwarfs running among the pebbles of the Crau, jumping over tufts of grass, or careering along the road by the carriage side, making faces at me. But gradually their number decreased, and I failed finally to see any more.
>
> One June day in the year 1884, one of my boys, then aged eight *[most likely Julian, born 1877]*, was picking gooseberries in the fruit garden at home, when, standing between the bushes, he saw a little man of his own height, with a brown peaked cap, a red jacket, and green breeches. He had black hair and whiskers and beard. He looked angrily at the boy and said something. The child was frightened, ran indoors and told his elder brother *[Edward, born 1871]* and sister. They brought him to me, and his elder brother repeated the story, but purposely varied the description of the apparition, so as to see whether the lad held to the same account, but the child at once corrected him, and told me his story, which his brother informed me agreed exactly with what in his alarm, he had first told. The little boy was looking white, and frightened. Again a case of sun on the head.
>
> Now for another. A lady whom I know very well indeed, and who never deviated from the truth in her life — save when she swore at the altar to honour and obey me — was walking one day, when a girl of thirteen, beside a quickset hedge; her brother was on the other side. I believe they were looking for birds' nests. All at once she saw a little

man dressed entirely in green, with jacket, breeches, and high peaked hat, seated in the hedge, staring at her. She was paralysed with terror for a moment, then recovering herself, she called to her brother to come round and see the little green man. When he arrived the dwarf had disappeared. *[Grace Baring-Gould née Taylor, 1850 -1916. This would have been at Horbury, West Yorkshire in 1863, the year before she met him.]*

At this point he began thinking out loud about whether such apparitions really were the effects of the sun, and why it didn't induce hallucinations of other things. Of course, his father's explanation was bogus. Trust me; I've lived in a subtropical city for most of my life. The sun doesn't make you see *anything*.

In any case, here we have a prominent person, with nothing to gain by it, telling a fantastic story. Although he was a clergyman, he saw no religious significance in it. Indeed, it would be more appropriate for someone like Sir Charles Isham, a spiritualist who started the garden gnome craze. Baring-Gould admitted that he did not understand the experience, but he did not make a big deal of it. It was just something sandwiched in the middle of an account of more mundane matters. I can't see any reason to doubt that he was telling the truth as he saw it.

But we are also presented with two features common to these experiences: they happened to children, but they were remembered vividly as real events when they became adults. Note also that the son was a blood relation of the other two witnesses. Does susceptibility to seeing such otherwise invisible beings run in the family?

And one wonders how many other such stories are "out there", but remain hidden in more obscure publications.

Although we are restricted to English language sources, the phenomenon appears to be worldwide. Americans, for instance, are not supposed to believe in fairies. That superstition might linger in remote rural areas of the Old World, but it failed to travel to the New, right? But back in 2009, a correspondent sent the following account to the paranormal researcher, Robert Goerman[ci]:

Dear Mr. Goerman:

I don't know if you will consider this a monster activity or not, but here it goes. This happened in Roswell, N. Mex. In the summer of

1997, at about 5:30 A.M., I took my cup of coffee outside to a picnic table in the back yard. My Chihuahua Bella followed me. At first, I thought my neighbor had bought a dog, a little Schnauzer. Taking a better look, I noticed it was not a dog but a "little man." Bella thought it was a dog also as she ran to the fence to get a better look. We both noticed a little man about 12 inches tall, stocky built with bushy eyebrows (gray) and a beard. He was wearing a gray woollen type shirt (no buttons) and gray pants with a rope for a belt. He had brown boots that looked like socks.

Bella ran back into the house and under my bed, shaking, and remained there most of the day. The little man had a funny walk from side to side and quickly ran into a big Chinaberry tree and disappeared. I could not see a door or entrance but the little man disappeared into the tree.

I will never forget this as long as I live. Thank you for taking the time. You may use my story.

Sincerely yours,
Minnie (Last name withheld)

In North Carolina a woman was working in the garden with her six year old daughter about half past ten in the morning when she caught a movement out of the corner of her eye. Suspecting a cottonmouth snake, she ordered her daughter not to move, and looked closer. Their mouths dropped open when they saw a little man, no more than three inches tall, dark skinned and with dark clothing, run across the flowerbed.

"Did you see that?" she exclaimed.

"Yup, that's one of the flower men," her daughter replied. "I've seen them before, but they run away."[cii]

So this lady really did have fairies at the bottom of her garden!

Welshman, Peter Brookesmith related what happened to him a quarter of a century before, in the late 1970s, when he was strolling through a rural area south of Dublin, Ireland. As he passed a track which went off at right angles to the main one he was following, he saw a little man sitting in the sun about 20 yards away. He was bout 10 inches tall seated, and did not look at all like the "fat nasty garden-gnome-like objects" the Irish tourist traps pass off as leprechauns. It was slim, clad in trousers, some sort of smock, and a "longish droopy nightcap-like item of headgear." And it was

green all over, including its skin. It took him a short while for it to dawn on him that he had just observed something bizarre. When he turned around for a second look, it had gone. Nothing in the immediate vicinity could possibly been mistaken for it[ciii].

Of course, these witnesses knew they were describing fairies. In fact, the last two were submitted to the *Fortean Times* during a period of discussion on the subject. It might be more useful to cite accounts by witnesses who never mentioned the word, "fairy" or its equivalent, but just wanted to tell how they had encountered something beyond their frame of reference.

Western Australia, *1930*

In 1982, *The Western Mail* (Perth) ran an article on the new movie, *ET*, which inspired 67-year-old Beryl Hickey to recount a weird experience she had as a teenager, in the town of Mandurah (32° 30' S, 115° 45' E), which is situated on the coast, where Peel Inlet opens to the sea.

> While sitting reading with my parents in a humpy *[shack]* on a block in Mandurah in Greary Rd by the light of a hurricane lamp with the door partly open, the time about 8 pm, as we went to bed early, a little pink creature walked in—about 24 inches in height, large ears, big, bulbous eyes covered with a film, small hands, large feet, slit of a mouth, no hair, and shiny as if wet or oily. We were terrified, and my father went white and being a religious man, said it was the work of the Devil. Picking up a prawning net, he picked it up and it made a noise like *EE EE*, and my father put it outside. We never saw it again, and went to bed feeling very scared. This was in 1930 and I never thought any more about it until I saw a picture of E.T., although only its eyes were the same[civ].

It might seem strange to include as an "apparition" something solid enough to be picked up and covered with a net but, as I explained earlier, nothing is cut and dried in the paranormal. And, as I also mentioned, the fairies of folklore appear to possess solid bodies. The next case also implies a physical body.

The Little Man in the Gutter

I told you that people with strange experiences tend to contact ufologists. So on 20 August 1980, Mrs Joy Barish of Massachusetts addressed a letter to *Flying Saucer Review.*

> In the 1930s a friend of mine, who now lives in Michigan, but who was then a resident of Cincinnati, Ohio—a little girl of 8 at the time—picked up what she called a "tiny man" from a rain-swept gutter. Her description of it, and the illustration she sent me, was of an elf … as described in Geoffrey Hodson's Fairies at Work and Play.
>
> She said it had "petrified eyes" and she was all but persuaded to hand it over to a neighbour who regarded her discovery with a cold fish eye. He asked her to give "it" to him, but she let it go and it scampered away between two houses. It had a tight-fitting suit. Its face was small and triangular with pointed ears, and slanting eyes too. It was as agile as any insect, but it certainly was not the "praying mantis" the cold-eyed neighbour insisted it might be. Right before she picked up this tiny entity she saw a balloon-shaped object fly over hills beyond the city.
>
> The entity in Hodson's book in the category 3 to 6 inches have large ears, little thin legs and fit the entity my friend picked up.
>
> For many years after that she had grotesque nightmares of terrible-looking creatures dancing in a mad circle behind her house. The following day she would check the dream site, and the grass there had been flattened into a circle, and seemed to remain greener than the rest of the yard.[cv]

Regrettably, I did not think to write to Mrs Barish until 1995, by which time she was able to provide no further documentation or information except that her penfriend who had the experience was called Jackie Workman, and she had passed away ten years or more before. Indeed, Mrs Barish's somewhat incoherent letter suggested that she was becoming somewhat demented. Nevertheless, she appeared completely *compos mentis*, albeit rather "new ageish" in her views, in her 1980 letter. It is perhaps worth noting that in that letter she also added:

> I myself saw a UFO 200 feet away on June 25, 1970, hovering behind a telephone pole just beyond the house of our neighbours immediately across the road. This one had a brilliant (thin) yellow line about it, and 10 or 11 balls attached by spikes, or spokes … what I saw

looked real. I don't believe I was out of my body, but I think if I had approached it, it wouldn't [have] remained "solid" that long …

Fiji, 1975

This story turned up in an Australian newspaper, so when I visited Fiji a few years later, I took the opportunity to check up the original report in the *Fiji Times* of 19 July 1975.

> According to students from Lautoka Methodist Mission School, about 8 mysterious little figures two feet in height and covered with black hair have been seen near the school. The figures, believed to be dwarfs, hastily moved away into nearby bushes when the children began to approach them. As the news spread, scores of neighbours rushed to the scene. The "dwarfs" could not be found upon further investigation, and seemed to have jumped inside a pit near a bush.
>
> Since the first sighting, dozens of people have gathered near the pit in the hopes of seeing the dwarfs. Some sat there for hours with sticks and torches, in the event the "little men" might be harmful.
>
> The head teacher of the Methodist School, Mr. Narayan, said he threatened the children with punishment for made-up stories, "but they remained firm in whatever they have said about the mysterious figures."
>
> Apparently six different students, ranging in age from 10 to 14, actually saw the figures while returning home from school. One student said: "I saw his white gleaming eyes and black hair. I was frightened."
>
> "One showed me his teeth and then ran away," claimed another student.
>
> David, a student who apparently saw eight of the little people, wanted to speak to them but as he approached them, "the little ones ran away."
>
> Mr Peniasi Tora, a long-time villager who went to the scene after hearing the news, mentioned that when his forefathers came to Fiji, they saw little men already living here.

A recent article by Paul Cropper[cvi] quotes a more expanded version of the newspaper article than the one I copied. There were not six children, but five, all from class 6, but ranging in age from 10 to 14, and their names

were given. Also, the legendary beings who lived there in the time of Mr. Tora's forefathers were called Leka.

Three years after the event, the site was visited by Tony Healy. Tony has spent much of his life investigating mystery animals, and has written books on the subject with Paul Cropper. At that time, he was on a sort of global crypto-tour. He located the pit into which the Leka vanished, and found it filled to the top with rubble. He also spoke to the oldest witness, David Keshwin, now aged 17. David was the one alleged in the original article to have seen eight of the little creatures, but now he shyly told Tony that by the time he had arrived at the pit, there were dozens of children already there, some of them throwing stones down the pit. But he did see some small black figures come out of a side tunnel on all fours, and scurry back again.

North Carolina, 1976

One of the more celebrated encounters with little people occurred at Dunn, North Carolina, in 1976, but at no time did anyone ever mention the word, "fairy" or attempt an identification with an folkloric element.[cvii] Then, as now, Dunn (35° 18½' N, 78° 36½' W) had a population of between 9,000 and 10,000. After school closed on Tuesday, 12 October 1976, eight-year-old Tonnlie Barefoot was picked up by his mother, and left to play among the dried cornstalks next to their home, while she picked peas in the garden. About 5 p.m., he came running in, excitedly telling her to come and have a look, because he had just seen a little man "not much bigger than a Coke bottle".

She was busy, so she told him to run along and play. But then he came back with the announcement that he had found the little man's footprints. When the rest of the family laughed at him, he started to cry. The next morning, the only way his mother could stop him from crying, and take him to school, was to promise that she would look for the footprints herself later on. So afterwards, she went out to look and—lo and behold!—there was a trail of tiny footprints. The following day, Thursday, another adult agreed to help him search for further signs of the little man, and discovered a second set 150 yards from the first.

Now, Fred H. Bost, the managing director of the town newspaper, *The Daily Record* had paid no attention to the original tip-off, but now he learnt that the footprints had become a local curiosity. Arriving at the cornfield, he

discovered half a dozen people examining the tracks. On the second, clearer set, Bost counted 14 footprints, each 2¼ inches by 1 inch, which is a similar proportion to human shoes, and is consistent with a person 15 inches high. They were also definitely boot prints, with definite cleat marks (see photo below). Bost immediately thought of doll's boots, but then he discovered the only doll in the house, a G.I. Joe, was far too tiny to be responsible

That afternoon, they went to the boy's school and, with the permission of his parents, Bost joined with Mrs Jennie Brooks, the school principal, in giving him a "mild interrogation".

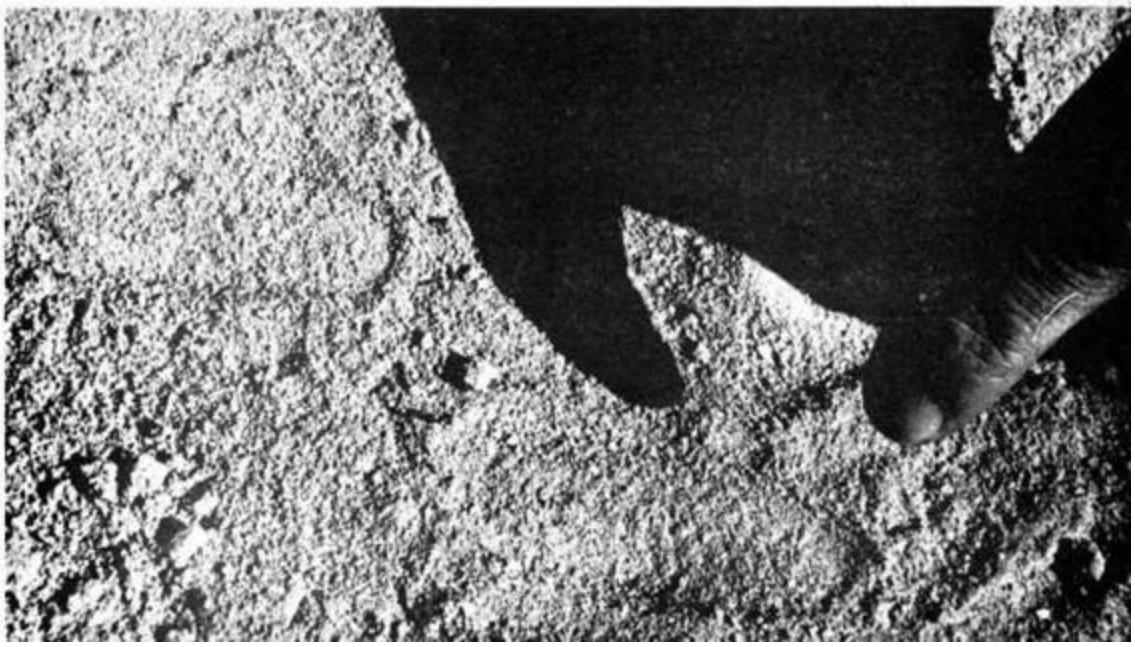
> Tonnlie said he was playing with his toy shovel in the dirt when he looked up and saw the little man watching him with an open mouth. The little fellow wore black boots, blue trousers and blue top made of "shiny stuff", a black "German-type hat" with something that looked like crossed rifles on it, and "the prettiest little white tie you ever saw.'
>
> The boy said that the little man seemed to have been reaching for something in a back pocket, but instead froze for a moment, then let out a little squeal like a mouse and ran—disappearing among the cornstalks.
>
> In the sketch he made, he also added a moustache.

The other newspapers picked up the story, and Tonnlie was interviewed by the news section of WRAL-TV in Raleigh.

Now, remember what I said about children this age: they can start a hoax, but cannot maintain it. Being questioned by his parents, then together by his school principal and a journalist, and finally by a television interviewer, he would have either broken down, or he would have headed off into such a flight of fancy that the whole story would have collapsed. Also, his initial reactions—his repeated tears when he was not believed—is further evidence that he was sincere.

Then there were the footprints. If he possessed no doll of his own capable of making them, then he would have to have borrowed one. A second child as confederate would have caused the truth to leak out. Furthermore, I would question the ability of an eight-year-old to "walk" a doll in such a way as to present a plausibly lifelike gait, and without giving the game away by spreading his own prints all over the site.

Above: Footprint which the author examined at the home of Shirley McCrimmon.
Below: The original set of footprints found by Tonnlie Barefoot.



It is only fair to add, however, that when presented with the photos of the tracks below, an anonymous correspondent provided a reason for doubting their authenticity: even a slow walk produces evidence of soil having been displaced backwards. Just the same, there does appear to be a

little ridge at the back of each footprint in the lower photograph. Also, according to the square-cube rule, the maker would have weighed only about 1½ lb. On the other hand, the prints were too close for a normal stride, so if this were the rule for the entire set, then something would seem to be amiss.

There is more. Two weeks later—on Monday 25 October, something similar happened. Shirley Ann McCrimmon, 20 was arriving home just before dawn after an all night party. Reaching into the front door, she turned on the light switch, and just then, she heard something like a small animal moving outside. She looked out. A little man was staring back at her. He was either wearing a very thin garment, or he was naked, with a light brown skin. In either case, he had no hat, but he was wearing boots.

Torn between fear and curiosity, she stood watching him for "several minutes" in the growing light, but when she moved, the tiny mannikin shone a tiny, but very bright, yellow light across her eyes. She screamed, and the little visitor zipped away down the side of her house towards the back, causing the dogs in the yard behind her to start barking.

Shirley then ran to the house next door, and woke her mother, who told her she was drunk. She therefore went to the house of Mrs. Corinne Smith, the owner of the barking dogs. Mrs. Smith's advice was not to tell the police, or else she would be thrown into the "looney bin". Eventually, however, Shirley could contain it no longer; she went to her aunt's place down the road and called the police.

Now, if Miss McCrimmon had been partying all night, then she probably had been drinking. However, she would have to be very, very drunk in order to hallucinate like that—so drunk it would have been obvious from her gait, her slurred speech, and her smell. There would be no way a neighbour, an aunt, a policeman, and a journalist would not have immediately recognised the fact. The policeman would probably have run her in. Her reaction in running to her mother, her neighbour, and then her aunt, all testify to her sincerity.

Then again, when Officer George Robinson arrived, she showed him a tiny footprint. By the time Fred Bost arrived, the policeman had left, and the footprint had been obliterated. Shirley had covered it with a plastic container, but her baby boy had moved it, wiping away the print. Just the same, Officer Robinson later told him that it had definitely resembled a footprint. Also, Bost was able to discover another one in the hard-packed

dirt of the driveway—a print not as clear as the earlier ones, and without cleats, but the same size.

Another thing that Bost found puzzling was that, in all the locations, the footprints led nowhere. The ground had been soft in both sections of the cornfield, yet in each case, the footprints ended abruptly. Although the soil was hard where the footprint was found at the McCrimmon home, it was soft in the garden area where the little man had been seen, but no footprints were present. Also, Bost checked out the dolls in the town's stores, but was unable to find any that matched the prints.

This tale had one sequel. A resident came in to Mr. Bost's office to buy up back copies of the relevant newspapers to send to friends in Cleveland, Ohio. It seems one of the women her friends knew had suddenly started talking about seeing "a very small, very little man".

The Blue Man of Studham Common

Bedfordshire, England, 28 January 1967, about a quarter to two, and the children, all in the ten to eleven age bracket, were filing back into the Studham Lower School after the lunch break. Noting that six or seven of the boys appeared very excited and nervous, their teacher, Miss Newcomb, asked them the reason. They didn't wish to tell; they said she wouldn't believe them. So she separated them, and got them to write down their accounts, and found that they agreed[cviii].

The school is close to Studham Commons, and the boys had been heading towards a nearby patch of trees called the Dell in which to play hide and seek. Although there had been rain earlier, the sky was now clear. But suddenly, a bolt of lightning struck nearby. The boy in advance of the party, Alex Butler reached a bank above the Dell, and saw a bluish silhouette at the foot of the opposite bank, about 20 yards away. That is pretty close; even at a greater distance, one would be able to recognize a person. The others raced down at his call, paused in amazement, and then ran towards the figure. Suddenly, it appeared to emit a "puff of smoke" or yellowish-blue mist, which moved towards the boys. Then the figure vanished. More curious than scared, the boys began searching the Dell. They spotted it again on the other side of the Dell, but it had vanished by the time they arrived. They saw it again at the bottom of the Dell, at about 20 yards, but again it vanished in a puff of smoke. At this point, they heard

some strange babbling, and they saw the entity for a fourth time. Then the school whistle rang.

What did the entity look like? It was three feet high, and a dark bluish-grey colour, but a glow or sheen obscured its features. The clothing appeared to be of a single piece, with a long black belt hanging down (the description is obscure at this point). In the front of the belt was a black box about six inches square. But the most amazing piece of apparel was a hat which towered two feet off its head, with a rounded top like a bowler, but without a brim.

The legs and feet were scarcely noticeable, and the short arms were held at the side and hardly moved. As for its face, it had two round eyes, a flat triangle for a nose, and something which may have been a fringe of hair above the eyes. If this wasn't enough, it sported a forked, bluish beard, the two forks of which ran down opposite sides of the chest.

A booklet about the case was produced, possibly by Miss Newcomb. Five weeks later, the local newspaper ran a short article on the subject, which inspired three prominent ufologists to investigate. One of them interviewed the boys in the presence of their teacher.

This will not be the last case you will read of multiple child witnesses, so let's do a thought experiment. Suppose six or seven *adults* decided, for some reason, to make up a completely ridiculous story. Almost certainly one of them would say: "They're bound to ask us about details we didn't volunteer in the first instance, and it's likely we'll be questioned separately. So we had better get all the details of our story down pat, and memorise them." That's how grown-ups would reason. But a bunch of boys aged ten and eleven? I don't think so. Also, doesn't it seem unlikely that none of them broke under all the questioning, and that they never laughed with their little friends about how they had pulled one over the grown-ups? After all, that would have been the whole point of the hoax.

And why did the ufologists get involved? Because, even at that time, they knew of a large number of apparent aliens observed in connection with flying saucers. But in this case, there was no UFO, and the entity was bizarre even by UFO occupant standards. Of course, it is bizarre even by fairy or ghost standards. And yes, the box on the belt and the blue mist does suggest some technological phenomenon. But it's a piece of the Big Jigsaw Puzzle, and we must collect them all.

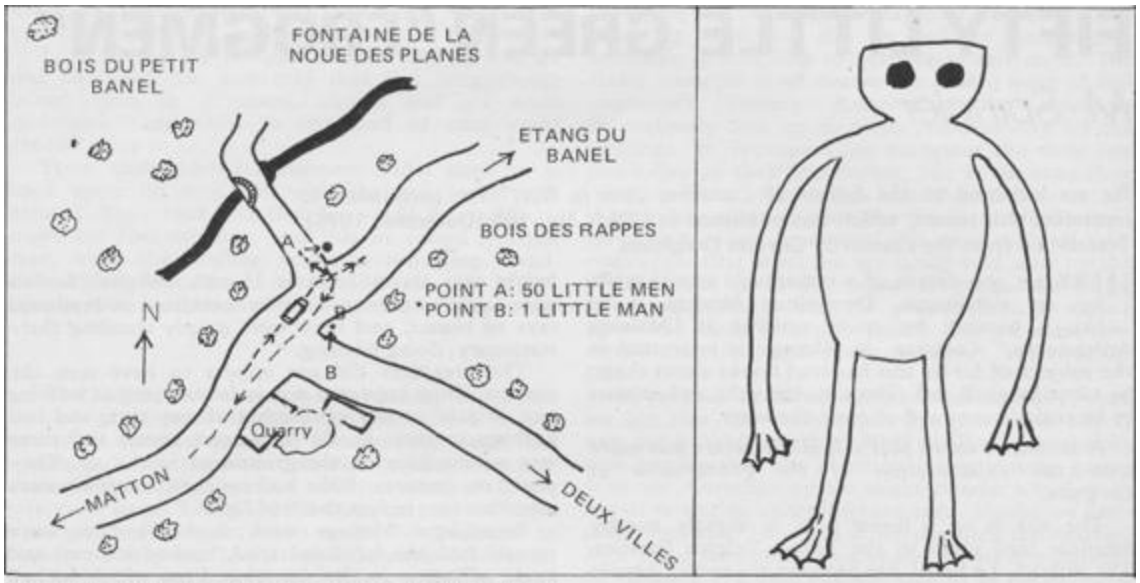
Fifty French Frogmen

Only a single witness was involved in this case. It also got the ufologists involved, although there was no UFO, and the entities bore no resemblance to any UFO occupant, or anything else for that matter.

The site was described as "on a forest path in a slightly marshy meadow land close to he Franco-Belgian frontier" in the Ardennes. It was the evening of Sunday, 2 May 1976, the sky overcast, warm and stormy. Twenty-one year old butcher, Dominique Menuge (who, it was admitted, was interested in UFOs) did not have a watch, but he estimated the time as between 9 and 9.30 p.m. He had turned on the lights of his car, because it was now semi-dark. (Australian readers must understand that this is daylight savings time in summer, in a high latitude, where the twilight tends to linger.)

> Suddenly, just as his car was about ten metres before the left-hand turn-off to Fontaine, he caught sight of about fifty little men in the beam of his lights (at point (A) on Map). The little men were quite close, to his left, in the field, which is level with the road. They were green and froglike (see sketch No. 2), standing erect and quite still. Some were facing him, and some in profile.
>
> Although they were green, they did not appear to be wearing overalls. If indeed they were in overalls, then these were tightly fitting. They had long arms hanging down as far as half way down their legs. They had webbed hands. Their legs looked normal, but the feet were also webbed, like the feet of frogs. Their heads appeared to be covered with masks or helmets with two big eyes 10 cm [4 in] or so in diameter resembling highway traffic lights. Their height was about 1 metre 15 cm. [3 ft 9 in] and their bodies were fairly corpulent. Their eyes emitted no luminous rays or beams, and they were simply standing there stationary, doing nothing[cix].

It was the "red lights" which had first caught his attention, so it is likely they displayed eye-shine. M. Menuge didn't hang around. Negotiating a three point turn, he shot off back the way he had come, on the way passing another of the entities at in the bushes point B, and didn't stop till he reached his brother's place. There he spent a disturbed, sleepless night.



Sketch 1. Map showing the crossroads at Le Banel from where the witness claims he saw fifty "little green men"

Sketch 2. A "frogman"

This was one case that was investigated. Although M. Menuge made no official report, for fear that his sanity would be questioned, the story leaked out to a ufologist named M. Spingler. The upshot was that Menuge told him the whole story on 8 May (ie six days later), by which time he had regained his composure. On M. Spingler's advice, they then went to report it to the local Gendarmerie two days afterwards. All of them—the witness, the ufologist, and the police—investigated the site thoroughly, but could find no sign of any traces, nor did M. Menuge display any sign of apprehension. His behaviour in fleeing to his brother's home, initially failing to report it, and then co-operating with the Gendarmerie, is consistent with his truthfulness. However, when M Spingler and the police returned to the site in his absence at about 9.15, they expressed doubts about whether his light would have reached the alleged position of the little men. Nevertheless, an earlier case was recalled in which webbed footprints had been found in fresh snow.

Small and Winged in Pennsylvania

What is it abut the air in Pennsylvania? In the summer of 1998, Martin Garcia and his wife were driving home at about 9 o'clock at night, the lights of their mini-van on high beam because of the danger of meeting deer. They were doing about 50 m.p.h., and had seen a few insects attracted to their headlights, when suddenly both of them saw what looked like a Barbie doll with insect wings. With two daughters, they knew what a Barbie looked

like. This was perhaps a bit smaller, and it had fluorescent wings which were oddly coloured. The thing was in view for two or three seconds. He pulled over to examine the grill, but it hadn't been hit. "I think we just ran over Tinkerbell," he joked.[cx]

The above sketches were made by one of nine or ten witnesses in a wooded, rural area of Chicora, Pennsylvania in the summer of 2005. It was probably about 10 at night, but the porch on which they were seated was brightly lit. All of a sudden, they heard a "tink", as of something striking one of the huge plant pots on the porch. As they looked, what initially appeared as a moth or bat the size of a squirrel shot up from the pots. Its wings were hunched around its body, as per the left hand sketch, but to their amazement, its head was very human in shape, but bald, with huge, pointed ears.

If that were not sufficiently amazing, it paused in mid-air and spread its wings to the maximum extent, revealing a perfectly slender human female form, with wings stretching from fingers to toes and beyond. She was about a foot high, and seemed to be covered, body and wings, with tiny white hairs, which appeared to suffuse the body with a soft, green glow. Her

body appeared solid, and was silhouetted against the light, but her wings were so thin, the light passed through, and the blood vessels were visible. After poising there for a second or two, she fluttered over them and the table, at a height of about four feet, for another seven to ten seconds, before vanishing into the blackness of the night.

The flabbergasted witnesses eventually decided they must have seen a fairy.[cxi]

The first report was e-mailed to the *Fortean Times* magazine, the second to Lon Strickler's "Phantoms and Monsters" blog. When two similar stories are reported independently to two different organisations, one has to wonder what is going on.

Too Small for Ghosts

As I've said before, people who have extraordinary encounters will relate them to anyone open-minded enough to take them seriously, and that includes, not only ufologists, but also ghost hunters. Take, for instance, how Molly Watson shared with Vivienne Rae-Ellis the story which her family had told for decades about her twin cousins.[cxii]

They were the sons of the gamekeeper of Rosehaugh House near Avoch, Scotland, and were believed to possess, to use the Scottish term, "second sight". Once they both happened to see a railway engine and and its carriages speeding along above the trees. Only some weeks later was it announced that a railway cutting had been planned exactly where they had seen the apparition.

Bear in mind, too, that these twins survived into old age just a few years before Mrs. Rae-Ellis' book was published, and always insisted the following family tradition was true. Back in 1909, when they were aged nine, they were mounting the staircase of the big manor house, when they noticed, stepping off one wing of the staircase, two men with grey hair and beards, and oddly dressed in loose tunics and small pointed hats. They were only 18 inches high. Much to their amazement, the two little men walked right past them and disappeared into the hall below. At least this time, people started using the terms, "fairy" and "elf".

A thirty-something Australian who wished to remain anonymous posted a report on the "Castle of Spirits" website, which is intended for reports of ghosts, but which often collects other encounters as well.[cxiii]

He was staying in a YHA somewhere outside Galway in Ireland, and early one morning decided to do some trekking through the hills. Up there, he discovered an old, ruined building, and pretty soon felt a sick sensation in his stomach, and an acute feeling that he was being watched. The hair on his nape of his neck was prickling. Behind the house stood a patch of strange, twisted trees, and in one of those trees was a little old man watching him. He insisted that it looked like a real human being, and wasn't a squirrel or a cat—so that should give an idea of its size. He felt like throwing up, and was convinced the being did not want him there. He decided to avoid the path through the trees, and continued up the hill. He told no-one about it when he got back.

Elves on the Shelves

You've already been introduced to Michael Swords, Professor emeritus of natural sciences, leading ufologist, and student of paranormal anomalies in general. One of his close personal friends was, in his words, "a tough sell on these mysteries, exasperatingly resistant in his willingness to affirm nearly anything in these fields." But he did affirm a story which his mother had told him on numerous occasions, without variation[cxiv].

As a little girl back in Chicago in 1925, she felt sick, and gained her mother's reluctant permission to take a rest in her (the mother's) room. While sitting on the bed, she heard a rummaging among the boxes on a shelf far too high for her to reach. An animal? No, it turned out to be a group of little men, clad all in green and only a foot and a half high. At the sight of their frolicking, and the sound of their gibbering, she burst into laughter, which brought her mother in. Of course, the little men were gone, and her mother didn't believe her. The same thing happened the following day, and this time the little men were even more raucous and boisterous. When the little girl begged them to be quiet, their leader told her, "If we leave now, we will never come back." Of course, they were gone when her mother returned, and she was punished for the disarray in the boxes on the shelf, even though she couldn't have reached them. And I presume the little men never came back.

A not dissimilar story from Australia was told by "SW" who, of course, could be either male or female.[cxv] At the age of about nine, he (or she) was lying awake in a dark room, with the bedroom door open and the landing light shining onto the built-in wardrobes. This landing light had a

solid glass, translucent, non-patterned shade. Up on top of the wardrobe, SW noticed the shadows of four little people dancing. They were very thin, like stick people, but one had a bushy hair-do. Fascinated and amused, but not scared, SW watched for "about 10 minutes", then went to the bedroom door to see what was going on. Nothing outside could explain the shadow play, which had ceased when SW looked back.

The Pixie on the Plane

Now for the one place you would never expect to see any "little people". In 1995 a then British police officer, John Hanson got interested in UFOs. After being joined by Dawn Holloway, they began a project of producing a comprehensive history of the the phenomenon. It is an indication of the immensity of the subject that they ended up with a series of ten (yes, ten) volumes entitled, *Haunted Skies*. And it must have been sometime in 2008 or 2009 that they received a communication from a retired headteacher on the Isle of Wight, who had an incredible story to tell —and it wasn't about anything as simple as a flying saucer[cxvi].

His name was William Davis, born 7 May 1923, and former RAF Pilot/Navigator Sergeant, serial number 1805619. During the Second World War, many imperial pilots were trained in Canada under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. (In my thirty years with the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs, I remember many files stamped, "E.A.T.S. Case" for "Empire Air Training Scheme", because they held dual eligibility.) In Sgt. Davis' case, he was posted to the Gimli RAF Base in Manitoba. It was 10 December 1944, and he had completed a two hour 45 minutes' flight on board an Anson V aircraft, in order to gain his "wings". Avro Anson aeroplanes, it is important to note, possessed a propeller on either wing, but none in front. A correspondent has pointed out to me that this aircraft normally carried a co-pilot as well as a pilot, and queried whether a rookie pilot would have been allowed to fly one alone. I have no answer to that, except to say that if Sgt. Davis was inventing the story, he could have chosen any aeroplane for the tale.

In any case, his story was that, at the end of his flight, he was waiting for the lights at the control tower to come on, and, naturally, was constantly checking both the instrument panel and the horizon. He happened to notice two bumps, like tiny exhaust pipes at the end of the nose. He checked his instruments, then looked back at the nose and saw that the bumps looked

more like hands. To his amazement, he watched as something like a traditional pixy or elf appeared on the outside of the fuselage in front of him, strolling around in a nonchalant manner until he was only 12 to 15 inches away.

The entity was about 18 inches high, with a pinkish face and a short, close cut beard, like an old English naval seaman. He was clad in some sort of green garb, with pointed shoes of velvet or some sort of non-leather fabric. A peculiar feature was than he didn't appear to have real fingers, but things which looked like little exhaust stubs, without thumbs. This doesn't sound like the sort of thing a person would make up.

By this time, Sgt. Davis was gesticulating through the window, without thinking that the entity could not hear him above the engine noise. In fact, he doubted it the little man was even aware of him. It had been watching the sky towards the left, but after about 30 seconds, it sat down, looked below, then pushed off with its hands and disappeared off the nose.

Both Bill and his son were interviewed by the authors. He told them that when he landed, he was exhilarated, but when he related his experience his comrades burst out laughing. I can't imagine why! Just the same, the next day a senior flying instructor visited him and informed him that he wasn't the only pilot to have had the experience.

In a letter sent in October 2009, he said, "I still think we will eventually get to the bottom of these sightings and what's behind them." Not in our lifetimes, I'm prepared to bet!

In the face of all this independent testimony from diverse corners of the world, can any reasonable person resist the conclusion that "there must be something in it"? Some of these stories might be false, but every single one?

And there are more.

CHAPTER 13

John O'London and the Little People of the British Isles

John O'London's Weekly was a British literary journal published between 1919 and 1954. With no particular attachment to the paranormal, in its second year of operation, it published an article debunking the Cottingley fairy photos and their proponent, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. However, it did feature an active letters section, in which readers would write in about their interests, which frequently produced a whole chain of readers' contributions. Then, in the issue of 7 March 1936, there came a letter from a Welshwoman called E. Bayly Lampeter, who asked:

> Can any of your readers give first-hand accounts of fairies seen in this country? There seem to be many who do see them, but who are chary of relating their experiences.

That set the ball rolling. Once the issue had been raised, a lot of people turned out not to be so chary.[cxvii]

But before we continue, let us go back to the rest of the letter. She gave what was said to be a first-hand account, but sounds suspicious to me. An elderly lady (whom I presume was the source) saw a crowd of tiny men on moonlit February night. Looking through a chink in the hedge, she saw them gather around a little lady sitting on a stone in the meadow. They told her in Welsh that they would soon be unable to use the meadow because a rich man would purchase it, build a house there, and drive a horseless carriage. Within a year it came true. The writer also added:

> I have been told of queer, round, goblin shapes on high legs, that escort people along lonely roads after dark, hopping and skipping in front and then leaping a high gate and disappearing into the grounds of gardens or of learned colleges. And the tellers of these tales are steady folk.

Now, Marjorie Johnson, of whom we will hear a lot more later, contacted the writer, and gives her name as Miss Edith Sparvel-Bayly, and she informed her that the latter event happened to a respected tradesman who had been returning home at night.[cxviii]

Miss Johnson also quotes a letter from Miss Sparvel-Bayly of 23 July 1948 about what local clergyman, the Rev. Edwards had told her. His uncle, who was a farmer, along with a second man, while walking along a river bank one evening, saw a light on the other bank. It was a crowd of tiny people clad in beautiful colours, dancing. The farmer kept watching until the light suddenly vanished. The clergyman later heard that his grandmother had seen the same thing as a little girl.

Miss Sparvel-Bayly also wrote directly to Miss Johnson in the 1940s about her young friend, Maureen Jones. Maureen had always been interested in fairies, and one day she went with her mother into the woods, where she began playing around an old oak tree. Just then, a tiny, very pretty lady in white came out of a hole in the base of the tree, and smiled at her.

Now for the second letter in the *John O'London's Weekly.*

21 March 1936, Joyce Chadwick: On the Devon-Cornwall border a few years previously, she saw a tiny man, dressed in black, strutting around on a cliff above her. Not believing in "piskies", she thought that it would soon resolve into whatever it really was, such as a bird or shadow. Instead, it remained a little man until it changed into a "long, furry black roll" which gambolled over the grass and disappeared. Soon it was replaced by a couple of slightly bigger, rounder piskies sitting on either side of a gorse bush, making sawing motions. Since the bush was hanging over the cliff side, they must have been sitting in mid-air.

28 March. Scotsman Struan Robertson claimed to have seen fairies four times. He met the first one on a hillside near Aberfoyle. She beckoned him to follow her, and she showed him "the most wonderful sights". The second was a group of ten playing among the gorse bushes and sheep in Arran. He later saw a clan of them hurrying along a green footpath, also in Arran. The last time as when he was tramping near Loch Rannoch, and was attracted to beautiful music coming from a clump of rhododendrons, where he encountered a group of fairy dancers.When he got to ten paces from them, one of them saw him, and shepherded the others away.

Mr. Robertson passed away the following year, but his widow told Miss Johnson that he used to keep a large company spellbound with his stories of such like[cxix].

28 March. This time it was Marjorie Johnson herself who claimed the experience. It would have been about 1917, for she was six years old. She was lying in bed in her Nottingham home enjoying the early morning sunshine, when she happened to glance at the fireplace. There, on a cobweb stretched across the iron bar, sat a humanoid creature four to six inches high, its (?naked) body "like shiny green jelly surrounded by an aura of green light", and wearing a pointed red cap of the same gelatinous appearance. Its ears were very large, its grinning mouth devoid of teeth and gums, and its eyes without pupils. (She must have got really close to it.) Marjorie woke her sister, Dorothy, nine years her senior, and she saw it too. Finally, Marjorie climbed out of bed and approached to within an foot of the "elf", at which point it disappeared. However, it reappeared as soon as she returned to bed, and a "game"of disappearance and reappearance continued until she foolishly brushed away the cobweb.[cxx] This would be by no means the last fairy Marjorie would encounter.

4 April. I. W. Beer was driving through Hertfordshire countryside when he saw, sitting on a tree stump by the roadside, a round-faced little man about a foot and a half in height, with a pointed cap, the top of which fell to one side, nightcap fashion. He was gone in an instant.

11 April. There were three letters published that day. We shall start with the experience of W. J. Fraser, when he was a boy of ten, forty years before. He woke up at dawn, with the moon full and the sun making red streaks in the sky. On the chair next to his bed sat two old women, wearing tall, dark, conical hats and long dark gowns, and who were only 18 inches high. They looked at him for about twenty seconds, smiled at each other, then jumped down in slow motion to the carpeted floor. He gently eased himself out of the bed, and searched everywhere, even under the furniture and in the cupboard, but he never saw them again. The experience left a lasting impression in him. Just the same, I wonder if this were merely some sort of sleep disorder.

11 April. Doris Stephens told how, during the First World War, in the Welsh countryside, she, her mother, and two maids watched a group of figures raking in the hay on a neighbouring farm early in the day, before it would have had time to dry. That evening, they met the farmer, and raised

the issue, but he denied that any such thing had happened. The author felt they had witnessed “a kind of psychic phenomenon”. Nevertheless, it is had to see what it had to do with fairies.

11 April. John Kerr’s story is all the more interesting in that it happened just two years beforehand, at very close range, even if he didn’t actually describe the fairies. It is probably best to quote the letter in full.

> During the late summer of 1934, I stayed at the Hills Hotel at Largs, Ayrshire. One very hot afternoon, about four o’clock, I was walking in the grounds with a Kilmarnock lady, a resident, when she drew my attention to a large flowering shrub about twelve feet high. At a distance we could see small forms whirling around the blooms, and on closer inspection we saw that a host of fairy forms were at play. I was so astonished that I foolishly went to the large shrub, shook the lower branches, and stepped back to see if the forms were still there. They were, but soon disappeared among the blooms, and we did not see them again. We mentioned it to the manager, who said that another resident had seen fairies in the grounds. He had suspected that his informant was ‘soft in the head’, and had paid no attention to the story. I consider myself hard-headed, but I did see things that afternoon. It was the first time such an experience had befallen me, and until that moment I should have laughed at anyone who maintained that fairies are real beings.

2 May. J. H. Craigen told a second hand story from Ireland. Twenty years before, five employees of a large estate in Co. Derry were dredging a canal on the estate when one of them, in advance of the others, approached a thorn bush. Just then, a little man about 18 inches high, with a red coat and a conical hat, emerged from the bank and took off like a rabbit. The workman ran after him, followed by his companions, but the little blighter got away (naturally). The author said that the men were always sceptical about the supernatural, but to that day they insisted the story was accurate.

16 May. In response to the above letter, a person self-identifying only by the initials, N.V.M. told of an experience while living at Cookham Dean, Berkshire in 1916. While searching for blackberries, he or she saw some particularly fine ones on an isolated bush.

I was tugging at some rather out of reach, when the whole bush seemed to shiver, the sprays parted, and from out of the centre of the bush darted a lean, brown man, dressed in brown, with pointed cap and straggly beard. He was solid as far as the waist, but his legs were transparent and shadowy. He slid away like lightning and entirely disappeared.

23 May. A woman called I. Hill, from Wigan, provided this account.

> As a little girl of six or seven I would never tread upon daisies because it was in a daisy field that I saw my first fairies. There were usually seven or eight together, dancing in circles about three feet from the ground. They had long pointed caps, thin bodies tapering off to very pointed feet. I remember their puckish grins and seem to remember them being dressed in brown.
>
> Then, just before I reached my teens, on many occasions I kept tryst with a lovely fairy in a bower of wild roses near my home. Looking back now it seems I was always aware of this fairy in that leafy nook. She was usually a few feet from the ground, in shiny pink raiment, with long golden tresses, and always in a pink aura. The fairy never stayed long in my presence, but it seemed quite natural to me that she should be there.

It would have been useful to know the approximate year, and how big they were supposed to have been. The strange part about it—assuming it is true—is the fairies being off the ground. There was no mention of wings.

6 June. Finally, if we believe Mrs. Hilda Gray, she really did have fairies at the bottom of her garden.

In August, 1931, several fairies—female without wings, wearing some sort of flimsy, transparent gowns—were seen by myself and eldest daughter on eight occasions among the flowering shrubs at the bottom of our garden in Warwickshire, which was bounded by a brook. I saw the same little lady on three separate days, as she wore a pink gown, while the others wore bluish ones. She was so shy that she only peeped at me around a bush, and disappeared when I was about ten paces off. She was not afraid, I thought, so much as anxious to avoid close intimacy with mere humans. They were about a foot and a half high, and looked like ‘sweet seventeens’ reduced in height, but were simply lovely in face, form, and movement. I cannot get their loveliness out of my mind.

What are we to make of all this? It is noteworthy that, despite the influence of children's books, none of the alleged fairies had wings, though they might have been implied in Kerr's tale. N.V.M.'s story is interesting, not only because the author was apparently chary of publicity, but by the reference to the entity's legs being transparent and shadowy. That's a touch not found in other accounts, and implies something unsubstantial: a psychic manifestation.

I've said before that I have seen collections of tall tales, which were obvious for their extravagance, but these do not follow the pattern. The authors all sound fairly sober. If someone wanted to have a bit of fun, he or she would be more likely to plant a story more fantastic than the ones already published—and it would be told in the first person, not as a second hand story.

There does not appear to be any natural phenomenon which could be mistaken for the entities described. Just the same, some of the stories do sound a bit like traditional folktales told in the first person, and one of them might have been something like a waking dream. But can every last one be written off in such a fashion?

CHAPTER 14

Ron Quinn and the Little People of New York State

In 1942, when Ron Quinn was ten years old, his family was holidaying in the Mongaup Valley of upper New York State. Having broken some minor infraction, he had been sent back to the cabin for an hour while the other children played. Just then he heard a tapping on the window. There, standing on the ledge outside, tapping the glass with his walking stick, was a little man of the apparent age of 50, with a short, grey beard, but only a foot high. Ron remembered him as wearing a grey, tight-fitting shirt with baggy sleeves, a belt, and knee-length trousers, and soft, knee-length boots. His head was covered with a small, dark, crumpled hat, from beneath which his silky hair fell to his shoulders.

He was smiling, and his eyes were full of friendship. Although only ten, Quinn knew this was theoretically impossible, but the little man had all the characteristics of a living being, right down to a shadow. He beckoned to the boy, who opened the window and slowly reached his hand towards him. The little man stepped back, looked him over and, still smiling, jumped down and scampered into the trees. Of course, the other children laughed at him when he told the story, but he knew it had really happened. The little man had left a tiny footprint in the moist ground.

Fast-forward to 1989, and Ron wrote of his experience in a weekly paper in upper New York, gave his name and address, and asked if anybody had had a similar experience. As you have probably guessed by now, over the coming weeks, dozens of letters arrived in his box. Note that the letters went to him, not the newspaper, so the writers were not influenced by other writers. The result was his 2006 book, *Little People*[cxxi], which opens with his personal encounter in the first chapter. The remainder of the book consists of thirty stories, in no particular order, of brief encounters related by his correspondents.

The first one, Ch. 2, had clearly passed through many hands before it reached him, because it was set in the 1830s and concerned a trapper, a gentle giant called Big Bob McCain. Having been known as a teller of tall tales, and an exaggerator of the truth, he was naturally disbelieved when he

insisted this experience was absolutely true. He found a little man no more than two feet high caught by the leg in one of his traps. He was screaming in pain and fear but, to Big Bob's amazement, when he set him free, his leg was undamaged, and he was essentially weightless in the big man's hands. On running away, the little fellow allegedly left his hat behind, which Bob kept as proof of the event. The author commented that he had never ever heard of another case of one of these little men being touched by a human, or of being weightless.

Ch. 19 is set in the early 1800s, and concerns a frontiersman called Patrick who entered deep into a cave and came across a great throng of little people dancing. This, of course, is simply a modern take on a traditional legend about a visit to fairyland, and no credence should be given to it.

Indeed, my major criticism of the author is that he rarely identifies the informant. If the old man who witnessed three little men arguing in a foreign language in 1976 told the author himself, he must have been 89 years old when he did so. Perhaps he was. One story was told by the witness's daughter, and another by the niece who was present at the time, but did not witness the encounter. Chapter 25 is definitely hearsay. On the other hand, in one case it was specifically stated that the witness told it to Quinn face to face. All in all, I suspect the witnesses were the informants unless stated otherwise.

Irrelevant Stories

First of all, Chapters 27 to 29 don't appear to be relevant to the topic. They serve only to establish that he did, in fact, receive genuine letters about these strange events, and they were too good to remain unpublished. As I've said before, people who have a strange experience are likely to tell it to anyone who will take it seriously. In Ch. 27, a woman sent a letter anonymously telling how twice the key to a heavy trunk disappeared, only to be discovered years later right under the trunk, although not even a sheet of paper could be forced beneath it. The next chapter tells of a boy who walked out of the house one winter and saw the giant disembodied head of a bearded man floating above the trees nearby. Finally, the events in Ch. 29 sound like urban folklore; they concern people who just vanished very close to their companions. But for the last one, where a boy was approaching his parents' truck was visible one second and missing the next, the author

claims to have be personally acquainted with the stepfather. These are all very strange, but no little people were involved.

Typical Encounters

Getting back to the topic of little people, since thirty accounts are involved, it is best to start with the typical features before we go on to the more unusual cases. Typically, the report involves a brief, but nevertheless unambiguous encounter decades—often the better part of a lifetime—ago. This is itself rather strange. Wouldn't you expect a more even spread across the decades? If people were making it up, wouldn't many of them place their story in the recent past?

With one or two exceptions, the beings ranged from one to two feet in height, and nearly all were male. The author indeed commented on this: where are all the little women? They appeared to be Caucasian, and so was their clothing, albeit somewhat unusual. None of them, for instance, were described as tiny Amerindians. Apart from one who was described as extremely ugly, they were all essentially human in shape, only tiny. They appeared solid; there was no transparency, and none—repeat none—possessed wings.

Flesh and Blood?

Of course, these beings cannot be flesh and blood. As a qualified zoologist, I can assure you that a breeding population of tiny intelligent beings of the same proportions as human beings would be biologically impossible. Apart from anything else, they would possess a much larger surface-to-weight ratio, making them gain and lose heat at a much greater rate than regular humans. There would also not be sufficient space for all the neurons of a fully functioning human brain. Even if they did exist, they would still require a visible community providing food and making clothing.

Nevertheless, there were a number of cases which definitely sounded like solid biological entities. In one case, a little man three feet high fell onto the roof of a couple's car, and was taken for a wild ride. I am not sure, however, that this was not a genuine human dwarf. Much smaller was the little blighter who stole fruit from a picnic, and another who purloined eggs from a hen house. Such actions are not unknown in the fairy tradition, but seem to be absent from more plausible modern reports. One witness

watched a little man save another one from drowning. Another witness saw a tiny man exit a derelict house, under the floor of which he discovered a cubby hole which the mannikin had apparently converted into a home. Another found a little man using his barn as a home, with some fruit and a small mustard jar filled with water. Yet another witness claimed to have surprised a little man fishing and, when the latter ran away, took the miniature rod and line as evidence. The author was shown a photograph of it. None of these features are present in fairy encounters elsewhere. And, of course, there was the little weightless wonder caught in Big Bob's trap.

High Strangeness

"High strangeness" is a term coined by ufologists to label events which are weird even by the regular, run-of-the-mill strangeness of their field. Likewise, most of the encounters in the book were rather banal—at least, once you accept the premise of people one or two foot high. However, some of them were decidedly weird.

Take, for instance, Ch. 6, in which a little girl of five, lost in the woods, met two small "dolls" with shiny green clothing, small hats, and wavy silver hair down to their shoulders. She asked them if they knew where her aunt's house was, and they motioned her to follow them. The interesting thing was, as dusk approached, little balls of blinking coloured lights appeared around them. Even more amazing, the three of them inexplicably went faster. In later years, she would described it as similar to the way a movie is speeded up. What strange things for a five year old to report!

Ch. 7 tells of an experience in 1933, when the witness was boy of ten. (If he reported it in 1989, he would have been 66 at the time, which is not so old.) In the Catskills, he saw a bird he could not identify: about 18 inches high, black, with a long beak. Then he noticed a string in its beak, like reins on a horse. It went into the bush, and came out with a little man on its back, and as it flew away he saw how the mannikin's weight made it difficult for it to gain height. (Big Bob would have been surprised.)

The story in Ch. 16 may well be second hand, for it happened to an adult in 1929. Walking home at night, he saw a light in the undergrowth. There stood a dome shaped, yellow-green, translucent light measuring four feet across and 18 inches high. Just then, two little men a foot high slowly materialised out of the light. When they saw him, they jumped back into it,

and the light disappeared. The man marked the spot with several rocks, and a week later he found the grass slowly dying. Quinn wondered whether this was how “they” enter our reality.

Ch. 13: In 1939 a teenage boy found a perfectly formed wooden door about a foot wide and 18 inches high in the face of a rock. He knocked, and a little man peaked out. Needless to say, he returned to the same rock many times, but the door was absent. This sort of story, of course, is not unknown in fairy folklore.

But in the whole catalogue of weirdness, nothing beats the stories of the phantom zones in Chapters 14 and 17. The first happened on 29 June 1977. Ned was a bushwalker well familiar with this part of the Catskills. This time, however, he felt a strange tingling sensation as he walked past a rock formation, and he gradually found himself in a landscape quite different from how he remembered it. By a strange waterfall were four little people playing haunting music on flutes, so he took photos. He walked back for about an hour, felt the tingling sensation, and the mysterious landscape vanished. Although he felt he had been gone for three hours, his watch showed only 30 minutes. This, I might add, is the reverse of the time compression in the fairy folklore, where a short period in fairyland equals a long time on earth. And the photos? They came out, except the ones of the little people appeared only as greenish, out-of-focus shadows.

Then there was Dave’s experience in Washington State in the 1950s. Strolling around the familiar Neversink Reservoir, he noticed a fog bank hanging over the water. He came to an ornate bridge he’s never seen before, about three foot wide, and crossed it to a 6-acre island which had never been there before. In the fog he saw strange animals and trees, plus three bearded men with long silky hair and long white robes, who were only three feet high. When he recrossed the bridge, both the mist and the bridge disappeared. Between two familiar mountains rose a third mountain, which had never been there before. Then both mountain and island vanished. A doctor was also said to have had a similar experience at Lake Washington (I presume in Mississippi). Note that these last two cases were hundreds of miles from Ron Quinn’s centre of operations. He ends the chapter with a pertinent question:

What if Dave hadn’t made it off the island before it vanished? Would he have been listed as just another missing person? If so, where would Dave be today?

Of course, you will no doubt be aware that visits to a parallel reality have been a common theme in science fiction/fantasy since H. G. Wells wrote “The Door in the Wall”. Just the same, isn’t it strange that stories of two such visits were recorded by a single researcher? Not only that, but in Chapter 7 of her 1997 book, *Fairies, real encounters with little people*, Janet Bord recorded two instances of visits to such phantom zones, although no fairies were involved. Both were published in *Fate* magazine, but appear to have been independent, because one was told in 1956 and the other in 1982.

While we are on the subject, an even weirder story has been told by a prospector called Alex M. In 1968, while examining rocks in the far north of Canada, he climbed down a narrow “gouge” in a cliff, and found himself in a weird landscape with a pool of water on an angle (ie sloping), and two tall, bearded men standing and sitting in mid-air.[cxxii]

I don’t know what to make of these strange stories, except that it reinforces my opinion that we should never throw out any report, no matter how weird. You never know if a similar one will come along to join it in the file.

Getting back to the main topic: the little people. They are unlikely to have been false perceptions of mundane items. Besides, nobody is supposed to see such things. If one were seen, the tendency would be to rationalise it as something else. In fact, in one case the witnesses initially thought they were looking at a doll—until it moved. And most of the encounters took place in daylight, reasonably close up. And what could possibly be mistaken for a little man tapping at a window?

As for hoaxes, I have already made the point that, when gulling a stranger, it is best to do it face to face, so that you can see him nodding affirmatively as you feed him baloney. You don’t get the same kick out of writing to a stranger, whose reaction you cannot gauge—especially if you write anonymously, or with just your first name, as some of them did. Also, it’s not much fun writing to a stranger and telling him, in effect, I had an experience similar to yours. You have to ham it up. Besides, as the author twice put it: some of them may be bogus, but if only one is genuine, then something strange in going on.

There is, of course, a final possibility, which I don’t consider very likely, but is nevertheless theoretically possible. Perhaps the whole book is fiction, the output of Mr Quinn’s own imagination. If so, he didn’t do a

good job. As I said before, the stories are related in no particular order, and do not lead anywhere. Also, there are those three irrelevant chapters. Besides, if you want to make money, it would be better to invent stories about bigfoot or flying saucers. More people would be likely to buy it.

CHAPTER 15

Elves in South America

In the Indian markets of South America, I saw whole racks of books of magic spells for sale. Spanish speaking America consists of indigenous Indians and comparable populations of *mestizos* ie of mixed Indian and Hispanic ancestry. Until recently both groups were essentially uneducated, and a high proportion still are. The inevitable result has been a thorough mixture of the superstitions of both races.

Needless to say, anyone delving into the local folklore will encounter a plethora of beliefs about supernatural beings. In 2016, a woman called Jasmina told a Nicaraguan television channel that, as a child, she had been lured into a specific cave by a group of goblins. She was rescued only five days and six nights later when a local witch told her parents where to find her. At the same time, they discovered another woman who had been held captive there for fifteen years.[cxxiii] I don't personally believe it.

Under these circumstances, you might feel more comfortable with a first hand account from a westerner. Overlooked books are often sources of anomalies which are easily lost to our collective memory. Thus, one Sunday, a member of my congregation, named Trevor casually referred to what he labelled the "leprechauns" of South America, and told me they had been seen by Brian Fawcett (1906-1984), the younger son of the explorer, Percy Fawcett, who disappeared in the Amazon jungle, almost certainly murdered by Indians, while searching for the Lost City of Z. The relevant work was Fawcett's 1958 book, *Ruins in the Sky*, relating to his time working on the Peruvian railways, and the events took place near what was then the highest railway station in the world. When relating the experience, far from relying on a distant memory, he referred back to a letter he had written to his mother shortly afterwards.

Essentially, he had been making an inspection inside the Galera tunnel, while outside a blizzard was raging, and the fallen snow reflected a weird light from the still luminous sky. As he was about to emerge, he saw, silhouetted against this light ten yards ahead of him, a human shape only two feet high, with slit eyes, and the sort of clothing attributed to Robinson

Crusoe. Not only that, but it was accompanied by an animal the size of a cat, which resembled a large rat or stoat. His glimpse was very brief, because as soon as the mannikin saw him, he took off, leaving tracks which were mere holes in the snow, but definitely tracks. A couple of days later, he wandered off the stopped train at Anticona (11° 35' S, 76° 11' W), their highest point. Here, the mist cleared for just a few seconds, but long enough for him to see two similar dwarfs, with the same clothes, and the same animals, beside a small pool.[cxxiv]

He learned from the miners in that area that some of the mines are haunted by little elves called *mukis* or *muquis* (pronounced "*moo*-kees") which, like the knockers of the Cornish mines, indicate by the knocking of their little picks where rich seams can be found. He heard a lot of hearsay about them, but no first-hand experiences, but he wondered if his own were exceptions.

I wonder what the mukis' animals were.

More from Peru

The above was nothing compared to another story which came out of Peru. It is probably best to quote the entry in its entirety, and leave you to make of it what you will.

> The English-language *Buenos Aires Herald* of January 12, 1977 carried a Reuters report from Lima, Peru, about a twenty-year-old Peruvian university student, Jorge Alvarez, who, in a radio broadcast in a programme entitled "Interplanetary Contacts", claimed that he had been saved from drowning by weird little humanoids.
>
> He said that he had been going down to the bank of a river in Huanaco Province (420 km. east of Lima) to get water, when he fell into a swamp. He was sinking rapidly and had given up all hope, when "four scaly little creatures of human appearance, but with three fingers on each hand," came suddenly, and, grunting and gesticulating, extended several branches with which they pulled him on to the dry land. He then collapsed with exhaustion and, on recovering, found that the little creatures had vanished.
>
> Alvares described them as less than one metre in height, and covered with green scales. Their three-fingered hands were cold and clammy. A local UFO investigation group known as the Peruvian Institute of Interplanetary Relations (sponsors of the radio programme)

were reported to be taking an interest in the case and their president, Sr. Carlos Paz Garcia, was planning to lead a party to investigate this case at the site.

Credit and translation: Miss Jane Thomas, Buenos Aires.[cxxv]

It would have been interesting to know whether anything more substantial was published in the Peruvian press. All I can say is that, if you ever get trapped in a swamp, pray that they're out there.

Colombia

On 10 August 1973, four boys from the Normal School in Ibagué, one of the regional capitals of Colombia, entered the El Jordán gorge some miles from the city in order to gather botanical specimens from the semi-dry rivulet there. Their names were Medardo Martinez, Hipolito Garcia, Hernán Manjarras, and Mario Fernandez, and I gather that they were accompanied by an unnamed policeman at the time. Much to their amazement, they came across four humanoid beings only 20 cm, or 8 inches, in height, dressed in white, with tiny grey caps on their heads. They were standing beneath, and slightly in front of, a little stone footbridge, and appeared to be searching for something in the mud, but as soon as the boys approached, the little beings vanished "as if by magic."

In the stream bed was found what was interpreted as a series of tiny footprints. However, a photo (which I have not seen) was said to indicate six or seven deep, roundish impressions which did not really resemble footprints. The policeman is said to have made an official report to his superiors identical in substance to the boys' account. Needless to say, once the story broke, the ravine became the focus of a vast crowd of sightseers. [cxxvi]

Argentina

In 2016, a woman called Teresa contacted the Fundación Argentina de Ovnilogía (FAO), or Argentine Ufology Foundation with a story which had been haunting her for 48 years. In 1968 she was only five years old at the time, and living in Gualeguay in the Province of Entre Rios, which adjoined the border with Uruguay. (If my experience in South America is anything to go by, I suspect the town's name is pronounced, *wah-lay-why*.)

Along with a friend, she was playing in an allotment next to the football field, when they noticed some movement among the weeds. It was

a “little man” apparently having some trouble in a puddle. To her childish eyes, it was a living doll, which she picked up and cuddled. From the space it occupied between her neck and navel, it was about 20 cm, or 8 inches high, naked, with cold, slippery skin like a chicken’s, with an orange tinge. It arms were long and slender, its head out of proportion to the rest of its body. Its large eyes appeared sorrowful, but lacked either eyelashes of eyebrows. She could not remember any nose which, of course, doesn’t mean that one didn’t exist.

The two girls went off, I suspect excitedly, to her friend’s father, who happened to in charge of the football club. To her dismay, he wrenched the tiny entity from her hands, admonished her, and walked away. Afterwards, whenever he crossed her path, she would complain, “You stole the little man from me!”[cxxvii]

I wonder what happened to the little man. As is often the case, Teresa went on to have a number of other paranormal experiences. For what it is worth, this took place during a massive UFO wave.

You will note the similarity with the little man found in a gutter in Cincinnati, Ohio in the 1930s, although the stories are obviously completely independent.

This is not, of course, the only report from Argentina. It appears that, in May 2008, the COPENOA news agency carried an account by two citizens of San Carlos, in the northwest of the country. At a time when the population of the valley was in a commotion about a large UFO seen there, Walter Lopez and Ferlatti reported seeing a humanoid just 40 cm, or 16 inches, tall, described as “small, glowing, and wearing pants”. Some sort of force field appeared to prevent them from approaching too close. A shepherdess also reported a similar creature in the hills.[cxxviii]

Argentina: the Year of the Duendes

2002 was the year the Argentine press was busy chronicling the appearance, all over the country, of *duendes*—elves or goblins.[cxxix] Now, a short digression on language: the Spanish equivalent of “fairy” is *hada*, which derives from the same Latin word whence, via French, our own word comes.[cxxx] However, as this carries the baggage of childishness, the most common term used when the issue is taken seriously is *duende* (pronounced “*dwen*-day”), a generic term for such supernatural creatures.

Before we get to the main story, however, we might take a glance at 2000. In July that year a *duende* was said to have besieged a police station and a dispatch agency. However, I shall not report on it because, from the little I can glean of the story, it sounds like a policeman had a psychotic episode, and the staff at the agency just heard a lot of bumps in the night. [cxxxi]

Just the same, when a group of researchers from Buenos Aires toured the province of Salta, they investigated a remarkable encounter in that province in the same month. It is best to quote the summary.

> The main witness was a 10-year-old girl, Marisol Diaz, who found herself alone at home, when she claimed there were 4 or 5 dwarf beings in the kitchen. They wore white "plastic" attire, had big eyes and belonged to both sexes. A couple who seemed to be in charge and had a height of 1.20 metres [3 ft 11 in] and the rest were somewhat shorter, approximately a metre [3 ft 3 in].Curiously, the colour of the dress was changing according to the site because when they left the house it was taking on a black colour.
>
> According to the girl, they appeared to be a "family": the parents and the smaller children. One of them smelled a bottle of detergent and left it saying "it was poison".
>
> In total there seem to have been some 10 or 12 beings. Marisol's sister, who was bathing in a nearby irrigation canal with her cousins, was able to see the beings as they walked away.
>
> In the damp earth, footprints were later found, those of the "woman", described thus by her long blond hair, were normal, then those of her apparent partner being smaller, and smaller still those of the other beings. Curiously, some looked like shoe-marks and others with bare feet and were too long for the width. In other words, they did not bear the usual proportion of human footprints[cxxxii].

Now, getting on to 2002, the saga began on Sunday 17 February, at a place called El Duraznito ["the little peach"] in the province of Salta. A young man who preferred to remain anonymous, set off on a bicycle carrying a shotgun and hunting knife, because he planned to join some friends on a hunting expedition. Suddenly, he was knocked off his bike, and when he go to his feet, he noticed a black shadow in front of him. He managed to blast it twice with his shotgun, and when that didn't work,

stabbed it several times with his knife—all to no avail. In the meantime, he was screaming at the top of his voice, upon which a neighbour arrived on the scene and witnessed the black shadow pulling him by the hair. At the approach of the second man, the shadow disappeared.

It turns out the shadow was known as "El Petiso", or "Shorty", and both police and hospitals had five cases in the previous four years of attacks by this entity, which appeared to be immune to gunshot and knife wounds. [cxxxiii]

I am not certain whether this report belongs here in a chapter on elves, or in Chapter 21, where more evil entities are described.

In May the scene moved to the province of La Pampa. On Friday the 24th, a young man was hitch-hiking on National Route 35, in the vicinity of the town of Padre Buodo, when he was surprised by an entity which was described only as an "eared dwarf ", causing such a severe panic attack that he had to go to a health centre in order to settle down. For what it is worth, the following Sunday night a UFO with flashing green and red lights was observed in the vicinity, close to the ground and at close range.[cxxxiv]

At 5 pm the following Sunday, a similar creature appeared at General Acha, also in La Pampa, as the still frightened witness, Concepción Balbuena affirmed in her deposition to the police. It was very short, but she could not tell whether it was wearing clothes, because it was emitting a bright leaden shimmer. The second time it appeared, its colour was similar to a rainbow's. It attempted to communicate in an "onomatopoeic language", then departed at high speed.[cxxxv]

That wasn't all. A neighbour lady, who wished to remain anonymous, reported that the same (?) being appeared the following day, both in the morning and in the afternoon. Another witness also referred to its movement at great speed.[cxxxvi]

On Saturday 8 June, the police station at Ataliva Roca, also in La Pampa, received a deposition from a workman, Horacio Sueldo, 27 who was employed building the Colorado River aqueduct. A couple of days later he had settled down enough to provide a full account to the press. It was about 7 p.m., and he was sitting on a mechanical shovel, when he saw a strange green light approaching about 50 metres away. When he turned on the lights of his own machine, it disappeared, but he had been able to see that it was a phosphorescent green humanoid only 20 inches high, with extremely thin legs, and a head about twice the width of its legs. It suddenly

reappeared in another direction, but much closer to him, and at that point he took off in his machine, even dragging a gate onto the road in his panic. Completely unfit for work , he was given the rest of the day off by his employers.[cxxxvii]

The very next day, something similar appeared in the town itself. At half past nine at night, Marta Superí went out to get some wood, when the thing suddenly appeared at the height of her clothes line. It was silver in colour—at least its face was—its eyes large and red, and its ears long, while the three fingers on its hands were furnished with long fingernails. She screamed in terror, and as the entity vanished, it appeared to change colour. She failed to mention its height.[cxxxviii]

On Thursday 13 June, the action moved to another La Pampa town, Castex. In the early hours of the morning, a 70-year-old man went to his car in the warehouse, bent down to check a tyre, and just then saw a creature with large, rounded ears, a small head, and two red dots for eyes. In colour, it was a garish green, somewhat bright and, surprisingly, its body tapered to a point, like a triangle. He wanted to speak, but could not, and he felt heat on his body. Then it vanished[cxxxix]

A week later, four Castex schoolgirls approached some accommodation next to their classrooms at recess, when they saw a green dwarf which seemed to stretch out its hands. They recoiled in terror, and the apparition vanished.[cxl]

The last encounter with what the press were calling an “eared dwarf” took place in Rancul, in the Los Alamos establishment at 8.30 p.m. on Saturday 22 June. Two teenage boys, Néstor Pinto, 17 and Daniel Gatica, 19 had been employed in rural work for the previous 45 days, and now were engaged in trying to place a cap on a drink bottle, when they saw a mass no more than a metre [39 inches] high, with large, pointed ears, and little hands reaching only to its waist. Néstor bolted. Daniel threw a stick at the thing, and also bolted, falling over his companion in his terror. Once back home, they tried to barricade the place with chairs and other objects, then cowered in the bathroom for 45 minutes. Finally, they picked out a horse, and after it initially refused to move, galloped over to make a deposition at the police station in a place called Parera. It is not obvious what they expected the police to do, but it might be mentioned that the police did make a patrol and found nothing.

The boys also notified the owner of the field. One of his sons went off to investigate, but when he arrived at the site of the encounter, something affected all the instruments of his car, except the lights. They returned to normal when he left. The boys also displayed their bruises and scrapes to the local journalists.[cxli]

That was not, however, the last weird event for the year. On the evening of Tuesday, 24 September, the police station of Colonia Liebig province of Corrientes (27° 55' S, 55° 49' W) was visited by two teenage girls and their families. The two girls, Luciana E., 13 and her cousin, Monica A., 15 had been walking to school talking, ironically about a legendary creature called a *pombero.* Although they did not believe in it, it is supposed to be a sort of dwarf bigfoot, which lives in the forests. It was 7.20 a.m., and they were about a block from their school when they passed a vehicle, assumed to be a van, and noticed a strong smell. At that point, everything were blank.

You've heard about "missing time". Suddenly, it was mid- afternoon, when Monica awoke with a severe headache, and the siesta sun warm on her body. They were miles from the school, lying on the railway line near what was known as the black railway bridge. Her cousin was still unconscious on the tracks. Almost simultaneously she noticed two things. In the shade of a nearby tree was a *duende*: a little man with black face and neck, wearing a big yellow hat, and a red cape hanging from its neck to the ground. The mannikin observed them for a moment, then veered off and turned its back on them.

The second thing was that a train was coming! Monica managed to revive her cousin and get her, and herself, out of danger. They then hiked several kilometres to the nearest police station, not saying a word, although they did take a drink (? at the station). Later, at another station, they were examined by a police doctor, who found they were physically unaffected except for leg pain and swollen feet due to their journey.[cxlii]

No-one can say Argentina is boring! You will note that the entities described are not the sort of thing normally recognized as fairies or elves in the rest of the world.

CHAPTER 16

Miniature Vehicles and Their Occupants

As you delve into the paranormal, it does not become clearer; it becomes more complex and confusing. And one of the strangest manifestation of the "little people" is the appearance of tiny vehicles, complete with miniature drivers, pilots, and passengers.

Wollaton Park "Gnomes"

Of these, the Wollaton Park "gnomes" are the most famous, best documented, and arguably the most enigmatic. Essentially, in the evening of Sunday 23 September 1979, seven children went to play in a 500 acre park in the middle of Nottingham, England, and found themselves being playfully chased around by 30 tiny automobiles, each occupied by two miniature humans which looked like a cross between Enid Blyton's Noddy and Big Ears. It is unclear to me how the story broke, but it appears that some of the children were interviewed by a reporter the following day, and on Tuesday their headmaster interviewed three of them separately, and concluded that they had had a genuine experience. The transcript of the interview is the main source for this article.[cxliii]

The children, whose ages ranged from eight to ten, belonged to three separate households. Angela, Julie, and Glen Elliott were one set of siblings, Andrew and Rosie another, while Patrick was the odd one out. The headmaster interviewed Angela, Andrew, and Patrick, and their stories by and large agreed, even in minutiae. The differences, particularly in matters of colour, may be explicable due to the poor lighting and the sheer number of entities observed.

Both Angela and Andrew separately advised that the encounter occurred about half past 8 at night. Although Patrick said they were away from 8 to 10, both he and Angela confirmed that the encounter itself lasted about a quarter of an hour. Right away, it is clear that we are in a different era, and the age of the "free range kids" was not yet over. These days it is unlikely that children of that age would be let loose after dinner to play in the gathering gloom of the streets and parks of a big city. At that time of year, at that latitude, sunset would have fallen shortly after 7, and the adventure would have taken place during the second, darker part of twilight. Nevertheless, Angela affirmed that, although it was dark, it was not very dark, and I don't imagine they would have attempted to play among the trees if they weren't able to see very well. And no, I don't think they were making up this part of the story. After all, there were three sets of parents who would have known if their offspring were not at home.

So how did they see the gnomes properly? Apart from the fact that it was not completely dark, Patrick attributed their visibility to the brightness of their colours. "They showed up." Andrew, however, said that there was a light hanging in the trees—"just an ordinary light". It is unlikely that the street lighting extended to that section of the park.

The park gate had been open when they had entered, and they moved in towards a swampy area, till they came to the fenced off area next to the lake. Someone called attention to the little men, but Julie said, "Don't be stupid!" She later, however, was forced to apologize, as they all saw the appearance of the miniature cars in the fenced off area. Here comes the part which is very weird, and unlikely to have been part of a joint conspiracy to deceive. Patrick told the headmaster, and the other two repeated it to the journalist, that the cars appeared in the treetops, through gaps in the branches. (Here, presumably, was where the light was hanging.)

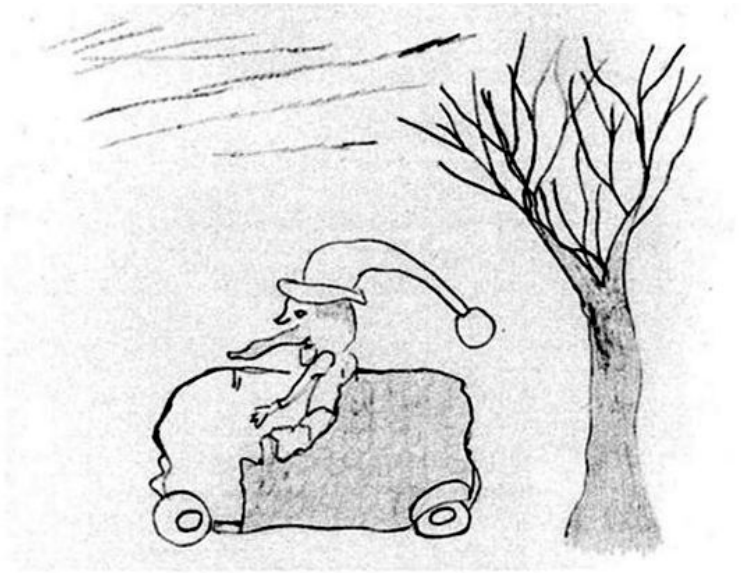
There was no mention of the cars descending the tree trunks, but they filed out through a small gate or gap in the fence. The next estimated quarter hour was spent playfully chasing the children, laughing merrily all the time. Although driving at high speed (40 or 50 m.p.h. was Angela's estimate, no doubt exaggerated), they never caught any of the kids. Patrick said that about ten of them got out of their vehicles. One of the boys fell flat on his face in a wet patch. While eight year Glen started crying with fear, the others were scared, but not *too* scared. Eventually, they hurried to the park gate, now shut, and attempted to climb over it, when Andrew simply opened it. The "gnomes" did not follow them out of the park.

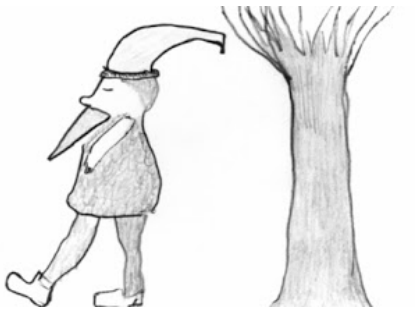
The Cars. All three agreed there were 30 of them, each carrying a driver and a passenger. How did they arrive at this number? The circumstances were not such that would permit easy counting. Did they discuss it

afterwards, and arrive at a consensus? The vehicles left no marks, and jumped over the logs lying around. They had headlights, but not switched on (Angela). Or the lights were triangular, and they were switched on (Patrick). They used bells, rather than horns, but all agreed that there was no engine noise. Both Patrick and Andrew described something which is unlikely to have been made up: that they had no steering wheels, and to change direction the drivers would reach over the side and adjust some sort of button or handle. Colours: white and red and other colours (Angela), red and other colours (Patrick), green and blue (Andrew).

The Beings. Patrick claimed that those who had got out of the cars called to each other in an incomprehensible language, but all agreed that, otherwise, they said nothing, only laughed. They were half the height of the children (? while in the car), and their faces were wrinkled. All of them possessed long beards—waist-length and black, according to Andrew, white with red tips according to the other two. (Would anyone invent a feature like a red tip on a white beard?). But the most distinctive feature of them all was their clothing. Angela asserted that they wore tights rather than trousers, but she and Patrick agreed they were yellow, while Andrew claimed they were torn, with yellow patches. Their upper garments were blue, while they wore distinctive long caps, like nightcaps, at least some of which were green, terminating in a big bauble or pompom. Andrew actually made a comparison with Noddy's hat.

Here are the children's illustrations of what they saw.





Although this was the first time they had been chased by miniature cars, it was not the first time they had seen the "gnomes" in Wollaton Park. Both Angela and Patrick told the headmaster they had seen them before. The first time, claimed Angela, was during the six weeks' school holidays. At that time, they weren't chased; they just saw the little people in the bushes, and the latter ran off. Patrick said they had heard them, and initially thought it was a lady in the bushes, but it was the bells of the little cars.

Has anyone else seen them? In 2016, Simon Young, a folklorist of the Fairy Investigation Society—of which more later—put in a request in the local paper for the original witnesses to come forth. They didn't, but a couple of others did. One man said he hadn't personally seen them, but his best friend at the time had. He had been about twelve or thirteen at the time, and had run away from home, then climbed a tree in the park, perhaps just to "chill out". Then, as he told his friend, while he was up there, he saw a lot of little men driving around in little cars and laughing loudly. The cars made a buzzing or humming sound, and appeared to hover over the ground, jumping over logs and fallen timber. He was so scared, he stayed the night up the tree.[cxliv] As he didn't mention any other children being chased, this would appear to have taken place at a different time, and no doubt represents a regular game by the "gnomes".

Another person e-mailed the following brief note:

I lived in Wollaton as a youngster, a short distance from the park, and saw one in our back garden when I was about six years old in 1972. We had a big garden and to this day I would swear it walked from one side of the garden to the other.[cxlv]

Another man told how, in the middle of summer ie only a few months before the story of little cars broke, he and a friend were playing near an old dry canal about half a mile from the park gates. It was about 9 o'clock, but they could still see well (more free range kids!), when on the opposite side they saw a white, humanoid form about 18 inches high, and glowing like a light bulb. The witness climbed down into the canal in order to approach the entity, which promptly bolted into a wooded area, and although they chased it, it was too fast for them (a familiar story!). His friend, however, was seriously affected. His hair stood on end, and afterwards he suffered a phobia about dolls, ventriloquist dummies, action man figures, and the like. He was never able to watch a "Chucky" movie.[cxlvi]

Marjorie Johnson collected two other reports.[cxlvii] I am reluctant to cite her, because she was a completely uncritical investigator, but shall do so for the sake of completeness. Mrs. C. George had told her that, back in 1900, she had been passing the gates of Wollaton Park when she saw some little men, between two and three feet high, without wings, but dressed like policemen standing just inside the entrance, looking very happy. Less plausible is the account of Mrs. Jean E. Dixon, who claimed to have been walking pensively through the park prior to the schoolchildren's adventure, when she met the gnomes. They then proceeded to show her the beauties of the natural world in all its delightful detail. But I suspect this was a purely subjective experience.

More interesting was the letter sent to Janet Bord by Marina Fry of Cornwall. Around 1940, when she was nearly four years old, she and her older sisters, all in the one bedroom, woke to hear the sound of buzzing or, according to one sister, music and bells. Outside, they saw a little man with a white beard and a "red droopy pointed hat", driving around in circles in a tiny red car. The similarity to the Wollaton gnomes is obvious, but the story was told in 1973 ie six years prior to the Wollaton encounter.[cxlviii]

"Would you like to ride in my beautiful balloon?"

This was the first line of a popular song in 1967.[cxlix] But if we are to believe one woman's testimony, in the previous decade she received a similar invitation in London from a most unconventional source. It was not until the Fairy Census of 2014-17 arrived that she was at last able to get it off her chest.[cl]

This has haunted me for always. I swear it was not a dream. I was in the back garden. My mother was hanging clothes on the washing line, and a sort of wicker-basket affair with a balloon on top came down by my side, but not landing on the garden path. I was rather frightened but stood there with one eye on my mother, who had not seen it. Inside were some small people, but one older man dressed in grey trousers, I remember, a grey top hat and black jacket. He had silver hair and it was curly and long, and the gist of it was that I was to 'go away with them'. I refused of course, but gosh, he was so persistent. But the whole contraption flew off. I ran to my mother and told her what had happened, and she took it for what most people would take it for, childish excess. It has bothered me all my life, because this was no dream, it took place, and everything was solid. English was spoken, and I consider it a really strange episode indeed. I can't say this was a fairy experience at all, but the size of this being seems to make me feel it might be classed in this particular category. It was no angel. I felt it wanted to do mischief. This was not a friendly experience at all. I believe anything is possible in this world. Our daily vision is a tunnel-vision one. But I'm afraid I cannot give you an answer, in truth, as to what fairies are. I really know this happened, and I remember telling my mother immediately. She was about twenty feet away from me, and did not see anything, but she did take notice of my state of fear. I would swear that this truly happened and was not a dream or any sort of imagination. I cannot recollect reading anything before or after with any illustration of such a strangeness in it either. A wonderful mystery! I wonder what would have happened then, had I said 'Yes'…

The Tiny Biplane

In Hertford, England in 1929, a five year old girl and her eight year old brother had such an unsettling experience that they didn't talk about it themselves until about 1960, and the lady herself did not reveal it to outsiders until 1970[cli].

They had been minding their own business, playing in the garden, when they heard the sound of an engine. Suddenly, down came a miniature *biplane*, with a wingspan of no more than 12 to 15 inches . It landed next to the garbage bin, and for the few seconds it was on the ground, they clearly saw a "perfectly

proportioned tiny pilot wearing a leather flying helmet". He waved to them as he took off. Perhaps that sort of thing could be arranged today, with a sophisticated remote controlled toy, but back in 1929 such technology was in the realm of science fiction.

The Flying Leprechaun Bikie

In 2002 a Californian lady named Jayne Kamal posted the following story[cliii]. Around 1974, she and her older sister were alone in the kitchen baking chocolate chip cookies and looking out the patio window into the back yard, when something caught their eye.

I remember I literally shook my head and looked at my sister. I said, "Did you just see……..", then she said, "A little man on a motorcycle……then I said, "Float across our back yard?!!!" We both started laughing and couldn't believe it.

It had looked like a leprechaun (but not dressed in green) on a tiny motorcycle, which just floated over the fence, over the backyard, and over the neighbour's fence.

Mrs. Kamal also said she shared the story, not without a certain embarrassment, with a coworker called Susan, who also had had a peculiar experience. When she was little, she had been playing in her upstairs bedroom when she heard a tapping on her window. There stood a tiny little man who, when she let him in, talked and played with her before exiting via the window and climbing down the ivy. Apparently, he came back several times after that. He told her his name was Jiminie Cricket, but he looked nothing like the Disney character of that name.

Mrs Kamal's mother-in-law was 75 years old at the time, but insisted the following story was true. When she was 15 years old and living in Palestine, she had been cleaning the house. She flipped over a couch cushion, and saw three little people. She screamed, dropped the cushion, and ran out of the room. Of course, when her parents arrived and lifted the cushion, the minuscule beings were gone. They always are.

The Micro-Ufonauts

But of all the cases of tiny vehicles and occupants, none are weirder than the Malaysian micro-ufonauts, which were typically described as just 3 inches tall. Significantly, nearly all the witnesses were children in the age group 8—14 years, and the sightings took place close to schools.

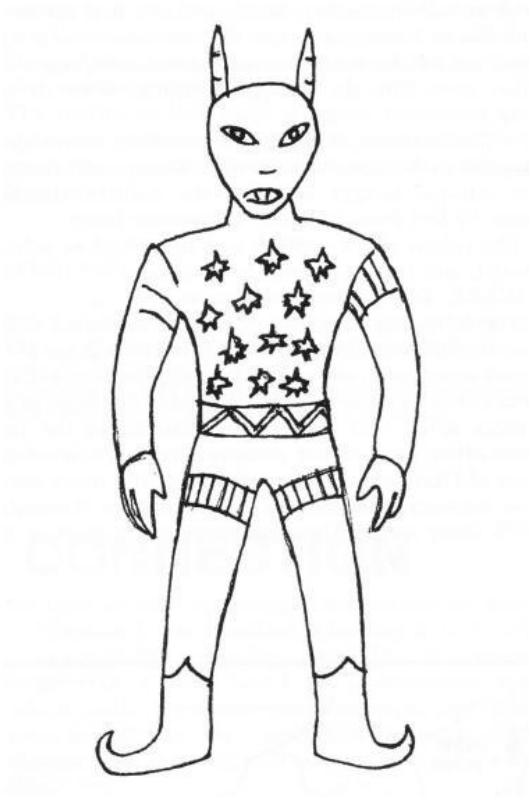
It began on 2 July 1969 when a silver UFO the size of a dinner plate landed in the grounds of a primary school in Johor Bahru, and out stepped five men wearing red uniforms, who were only 6 inches high. When they saw a crowd of children heading towards them, instead of returning to their craft, they jumped down a hole in the ground and vanished, and their spaceship likewise vanished[cliii].

In August 1970 a sensation was produced by the alleged appearance of a large number of 3 inch aliens outside Stowell Primary School at Bukit Mertajam, in the State of Penang. As it made front page news in the leading Singapore newspaper, *The Straits Times* on 21 and 22 August[cliv], here is a summary of the time line.

Wednesday 19 August 1970. In the *blukar*, or secondary scrub, outside the school perimeter, 10-year-old Wigneswaran saw 25 tiny humanoids venture out of 25 tiny flying saucers, but just as he was getting closer for a better look, the school bell summoned him back to class. This would have been in the middle of the day. Later, after school (in the evening, said the paper), he and five other boys, aged 8 to 11, were playing "cops and robbers" in the same general area, when they saw a flying saucer the size of a soup plate land nearby. Out of it emerged five 3-inch-high humanoids, four of them clad in tight-fitting blue uniforms, and the one assumed to be the leader dressed in yellow. The boys ran away after they saw the little men installing an aerial on a tree.

Thursday 20 August. Some of them returned at half past 6 in the morning, and found the UFO parked a few yards from the original spot, with the little men still guarding it. It appears that it was on this occasion that 8-year-old Mohamed Ali was shot in the hand by some sort of tiny gun. After they reported it to the headmaster, he went out with another teacher, but found nothing. During the 11 o'clock recess Wigneswaran and his friend, Sulaiman, also aged 10, returned to the site. The UFO was gone, but the aerial was still there.

Nevertheless, it appears to have been the same day that Wigneswaran was found unconscious in the blukar and carried back to the school by some prefects. He told them he had encountered the same five entities again. Once more, the presumed leader was dressed in yellow and, unlike the others, possessed two "horns". When the boy tried to capture him, the creature shot him with a tiny gun, leaving a small red dot on his right leg. Then he fainted.



Above is a smartened up version of the sketch 10-year-old Wigneswaran made of the yellow suited leader, which appeared on the front page of the newspaper. He also sketched the head of one of the hornless ones, plus the flying saucer. It was disc shaped, with a cupola, three supporting legs and, specifically, two ladders.

After school, two boys who hadn't been with the original group, T. Veerasingham (10) and A. Devaraj (12) decided to investigate. They went to the site, and saw two entities, just 3 inches high, sitting in a tree. One of them was dressed in yellow, and carried what looked like a gun, but he had only one arm, the left. (What an unusual feature to make up!) When they boys tried to catch them, they simply vanished.

The local police corporal, Mokhtar reported that, when his 7-year-old son, Mohamed Ariffin arrived home about 6.30 pm, he had a small cut on his left hand. He told his mother he had seen two tiny spacemen in the blukar, and when he tried to catch them, one of them had shot him.

When I first read these bizarre stories, I imagined they were contagious confabulations ie that once a story developed, it became part of a school boy "craze". Well, theoretically, some of the stories could have been invented after the first one was told. But is this the full explanation? They reported it to the headmaster. He didn't believe them (well, he couldn't, could he?) but he appears to have accepted that they believed it themselves. They were interviewed by the CID (Criminal Investigation Department), as well as the journalists —not to mention the parents of one of the boys. As I have explained once before, children of this age find it hard to maintain a hoax, because they don't know adults' criteria for credibility. They will either destroy their testimony by adding outrageous flights of fantasy, or they will break down and confess. Considering the intense questioning the boys were subjected to, wouldn't you expect one of them to break? And what about the boy who fainted?

That appears to been the end of the phenomena at Bukit Mertajam, but on 24 August something similar occurred much farther south, at the town of Rawang, and this was also investigated by the police. At 10 a.m. a turtle shaped UFO the size of a car tyre, set with five "windows", landed in front of a school. Out came another five beings, also 3 inches tall, and this time four of them bore horn-like structures on their heads. There was no gun play this time, and when the children and *many adults* rushed towards them, they scurried back to their UFO and took off. This was reported in a Malay language newspaper, the *Utusan Malaysia* on 28 August 1970.

By and large, the local ufologists ignored the reports when they first came out. However, when they started to give them a fresh look in the late 1970s, they discovered a number of people who remembered similar accounts in the press during the period August to November 1970. Here is a synopsis of these second hand reports[clv].

- *Alor Star*. UFO landed at a primary school, and 3-inch occupants emerged. A schoolboy was shot in the hand when trying to capture one, and the UFO flew away.
- *Ipoh*. Another landing in a school compound, and tiny occupants emerged. They returned to the craft and took off when they encountered many schoolchildren.
- *Kampung Pandan*. Another landing of tiny ufonauts near a school—seen by children, and possibly some adults.
- *Temerloh*. Another landing near a school, and some shooting when the witnesses tried to capture one.

Finally, the ufologists were able to talk to a witness. A lady from Kampung Paya Kecil ('little swamp village') told them that, in November 1970, when she was 10 years old, she saw two entities, only 3 or 4 inches high, standing about 12 feet from her, in her bedroom, near a kerosene lamp. She could not describe them properly, because she was so terrified, she closed her eyes, and only after several minutes was she able to even cry for help. It would have been useful to know whether she had been asleep at any stage.

There were a number of reports of other encounters, of varying reliability. All so far occurred in the Malay Peninsula, but in 1973 two were alleged to have taken place at Miri, Sarawak, which is in the Malaysian part of Borneo, and in neither case was a UFO seen. Several boys saw a humanoid being in a white suit, but only 6 inches high cutting through a wire fence with what appeared to be a laser. It escaped into the bushes when they tried to catch it. Six or seven tiny humans in white suits were also seen on the beach by a group of people on vacation. Some of the tiny beings had long hair, and so were assumed, rightly or wrongly, to be female. They also avoided capture.[clvi]

I really wish I had the full, original reports in front of me. Despite appearances, it is hard to accept that these were real intelligent life forms from another planet. Although tiny humans and humanoids have been a stock in trade of science fiction since the days of *Gulliver's Travels,* they are biologically impossible. For a start, these micro- ufonauts were no more than one 20th of the height of the local inhabitants—maybe less. It stands to reason, therefore, that they also had one 20th of the width, and one 20th of the depth. They must have weighed a lot less than an ounce. Moreover, when considering skin area, area by definition has only two dimensions: 1/20 x 1/20. It stands to reason that, for every unit of body mass, they must have had 20 times as much skin through which to gain and lose heat and moisture. They would have had to eat and drink a tremendous amount for their size. Warm blooded animals of this size typically live very frenzied lives, eating large meals every quarter or half hour, and at night entering into torpor, while their body temperature drops.

That is not the only problem. While a gorilla is twice as heavy as a man (at least!), its brain is only a third of the size. Intelligence requires a large number of brain cells, and a great multitude of connections between them. In short, absolute brain size matters—and there is no way a remotely human intelligence could reside in so tiny a body.

But even if all this were some bizarre psychological manifestation, it would be almost as mysterious as real, flesh-and-blood micro-ufonauts. And if they really were figments of the imagination, *where were the real aliens*? Those with long memories will recall that the 1970s were the heyday of more realistically sized humanoids reported from all over the world, *except* Malaysia, where the micro ones apparently had a franchise.

Not only that, but apart from the two Sarawak cases, an incident later arose on the Malay peninsula which definitely did not involve a UFO. At the Sultan Sulaiman Primary School at Kuala Terengganu on 12 and 13 May 1991, an 8-year-old boy approached the outer fence and saw "hundreds of tiny people coming out of a hole near the drain of a housing estate". He tried to catch one, and was stabbed in the hand, leaving a bruise. They were only 6 cm [2½ inches] tall, all dressed in red, and he could see their faces perfectly. That was during the 3 o'clock recess. Later in the day, he saw another little one emerge from a hole at the foot of a tree. Two little girls, aged 8 and 10 respectively, also saw them in the same vicinity[clvii].

Although the micro-ufonauts had a franchise in Malaysia, they were not restricted to that country. According to one account—and I have not been able to locate the original report—in 1977 a Janice Bakewell was walking in the woods of Wiltshire, England, when a silvery saucer, just four feet wide, landed, and out

flew three female entities, just 3 or 4 inches high, glowing brightly, and wearing silvery mini-skirts. After fluttering around her, they alighted on her right arm, then returned to their craft, which shot off into the sky. [clviii]

Other isolated reports exist for quite small aliens, but none as tiny as these.

CHAPTER 17

The "Mince Pie Martians"

I have mentioned before that nothing is cut and dried when it comes to the paranormal. And since we have touched on the matter of flying saucers, it is germane to discuss the remarkable events which allegedly took place on the morning of 4 January 1979 in the town of Rowley Regis, near Birmingham, England. On that day, the police received a phone call from Mrs. Jean Hingley, 43. Arriving at her place, they noticed that she looked pale, as if in shock. They took her statement, looked at an impression on the ground, and phoned the local UFO organization. The story broke eight days later, when a local newspaper entitled a paragraph, "Mince Pie Martians", and it is with this whimsical designation that it has become known. However, it was left to a UFO researcher, Eileen Morris to interview Mrs. Hingley and her husband several times, make extensive notes, and eventually type up the report, which the witness affirmed as accurate[clix].

It began just after her husband had gone to work at 7 a.m. and, of course, it was still dark at that time of year. Just then, her back yard was lit up with a bright orange light, which gradually turned white. Then she heard a sound like "Zee … zee … zee," and three glowing, winged beings floated past her into her house, about a foot off the floor. (It was not mentioned whether they used their wings.) Both she and her otherwise fearless German shepherd were paralysed with terror. Soon afterwards, the fear left her, and she felt exhilarated. She *floated* into the lounge room, her hand holding the door, but her feet not touching the ground. It was a bitterly cold morning, and the doors wide open, but she felt warm.

She had to shield her eyes against the brightness of the entities, who thereupon turned down their light. Their appearance (they were all identical) is depicted in the accompanying tidied up version of a sketch she later made. Between 3½ and 4 feet high, they were clad in silvery green tunics with silvery waistcoats, set with silver buttons or studs. The same material covered their pointed hands and feet, while their pointed caps were of the same colour, with something like a lamp on top. Something like a fish bowl encased their heads. In contrast, their wings glowed with a

kaleidoscope of colours—red, violet, gold, blue, and green, but more beautiful that any earthly colours. Strangely, they were covered with what she described as “Braille dots”.

As for their faces, they were waxy white, like a corpse, while she described their

eyes as like black diamonds. No nose of ears were evident, and their mouths were very thin.

Gathering her courage, Mrs. Hingley asked them what they wanted of her. Of one accord, they thereupon reached their pointed hands to their chests and seemed to manipulate the buttons. It produced a beep, and a voice came from their chests, without any movement of their lips.

"Where have you come from?" she asked.

"We come from the sky."

After that, the small talk began. Mrs. Hingley told them the Christmas tree celebrated the birth of Jesus, upon which the visitors told her, "We know about Jesus."

They were looking at the Sunday paper, the front page of which listed the New Year's Honours list, so she told them the people depicted had been made lords. "There is only one Lord," they replied.

When they floated around the room, their wings fluttered gently and silently, but when they moved through the door to the hall, the wings were folded behind them. Obviously, these wings had little to do with locomotion. She continued the small talk, and offered them some water. When she arrived with a metal tray, they levitated it towards themselves. She thinks they lifted their transparent helmets in order to drink, but could not see it clearly because they turned up their light as they did so.

> They said: "We have been to Australia, New Zealand and America. We come down here to try to talk to people but they don't seem to be interested."
>
> "Shall I tell people on earth about it?" I asked, and they replied "Yes."
>
> They said: "We have been here before, and "We shall come again." Another thing they said was, "Everybody will go to Heaven. There are beautiful colours there."

She brought them a plate of mince pies (hence the designation), which they levitated towards themselves. But when she demonstrated lighting a cigarette, they recoiled as if frightened, and floated towards the back door. Having stubbed out the cigarette, she floated after them, calling them to come back. Out in the back yard lay an orange coloured, glowing space ship, shaped like a football, an estimated eight or ten feet long and four feet high. It was set with a couple of opaque "portholes", and at the back, something like a "scorpion tail", with a wheel-like appendage on its end.

Still holding the mince pies, the beings entered the craft, flashed its lights twice, and took off over the fence.

Feeling elated, she told her neighbour, who told her to call the police, and the police, as mentioned before, called the ufologists. The latter examined the depression the craft had left in the snow, and measured it as eight feet by four. The clock and the radio had stopped, and the tapes touched by the beings were ruined. The lady herself had to wear dark glasses for a week because of her sore eyes, and she took some weeks off work as she felt unwell. Also, her jaws were sore from gaping at the beings. Apart from that, she suffered no ill effects.

Now let us approach the issue raised by the astronomer turned ufologist, J. Allen Hynek: what do you do when perfectly credible people tell perfectly incredible stories?

I was interested to note that the beings claimed to have visited Australia, New Zealand, and America. Do these countries harbour similar stories which the witnesses have been too afraid to tell? Come to think of it, I note that the beings appear to have been completely harmless, except for producing sore eyes for a week and some short term malaise. I wouldn't mind if they had visited me!

These visitors fit more into the fairy category than the space alien one, but even then the fit is tenuous. Be that as it may, it is clear that their wings served little functional purpose. From my background in zoology, I can affirm that wings of such size could not possibly lift bodies of such dimensions—at least not under earthly gravity and air density—and I also have severe reservations about a human scale intelligence existing in a heads of that size, although I wouldn't rule it out completely. Furthermore, the fact that the visitors appeared to possess a diffuse, internal light source does nothing to support the hypothesis that they were biological.

A rule of thumb in ufology is to reserve judgment until such time as a similar case appears elsewhere. The fact that nothing similar appears to have been recorded in the decades either before or after does not bode well for its authenticity.

Nevertheless, if we are going to label it a hoax, we are going to have to ask: why? What would make an apparently ordinary person suddenly, out of the blue, make up such a fantastic story and report it to the police, of all people!—thereby putting her at risk of being charged with an offence as

well, of course, of becoming a laughing stock? And what sort of act would she have to put on in order to make it look like she'd experienced something emotionally draining?

Just the same, we must accept that occasionally people unexpectedly do completely irrational things. It doesn't happen very often, but I suspect it is more frequent than visits from luminous, winged beings. But if we are going to head down that road, we still need to ask: where did she get the idea from? She wouldn't have found it in the ufology literature, and she would have to dig deep into science fiction before she came to anything similar. What about all the unlikely incidental details which serve no purpose in the story: the lack of eyebrows or ears, pointed hands, the "fish bowl" helmets, the "Braille" dots on the wings, "something like a lamp" on top of their heads, and the "scorpion tail" on the space ship with a kind of wheel on top, not to mention her own impression of floating into the lounge? What about the inane conversation? Didn't she know that our space brethren are supposed to send us messages of peace and brotherhood, or else apocalyptic warnings about our wars and misuse of the planet? To put it simply, not only is this story too fantastic to be true, it is too fantastic to make up.

Then again, there is that pesky impression on the ground.

CHAPTER 18

The Society and the Censuses

Of course, you may not believe in the paranormal, or any other scientific anomaly, but at least you knew there were people who investigated them. The Society of Psychical Research, the Ghost Club, and the various UFO societies, were well known, and could easily be contacted if you were so inclined. But in my younger days I used to hear tell of a shadowy organization, the Fairy Investigation Society, of which no-one knew anything specific, least of all how to locate it.

To understand the Society, you must appreciate the intellectual climate in Britain a hundred years ago. Spiritualism, and such nineteenth century occult movements such as Theosophy and Anthroposophy —the forerunners of what we would now call the "New Age" movement—were still very active. In 1919, this led to a transparent hoax, the Cottingley fairies.

Essentially, in 1917 two young girls, cousins, played around with photographing cardboard cut-outs of fairies with themselves in the environs of a local stream. Of course, the father of one of them immediately recognized them as fakes, but her mother believed them, and took the photos to a meeting of the Theosophical Society in 1919, where they came into the hands of a prominent member, Edward Gardner, and from him to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. This highly educated man, a medical doctor, and the creator of Sherlock Holmes, was completely taken in. The teenagers were trapped; their little game had gone too far, and now the grown-ups were taking it seriously. It was too late to back out and tell the truth.

These photos took centre stage in Doyle's 1922 book, *The Coming of the Fairies*[clx], which ended with a chapter entitled "The Theosophic View of Fairies" by Edward Gardner, who claimed (p 175):

> The function of the nature spirit of woodland, meadow, and garden, indeed in connection with vegetation generally, is to furnish the vital connecting link between the stimulating energy of the sun and the raw material of the form. That growth of a plant which we regard as the customary and inevitable result of associating the three factors

> of sun, seed, and soil would never take place if the fairy builders were absent. We do not obtain music from an organ by associating the wind, a composer's score, and the instrument—the vital link supplied by the organist, though he may be unseen, is needed—and similarly the nature spirits are essential to the production of the plant.

That's a pretty authoritative statement for something for which there is no evidence at all. No, I do not make such a judgment lightly. Normally, when people say, "There is no evidence", what they really mean it that there is evidence, but it is weak, ambiguous, unconvincing *etc*. In this case, however, there really is no evidence—even if we took at face value every fairy anecdote, or the whole of the fairy folklore (*especially* the folklore!). Despite this, the idea of fairies as "nature spirits" has caught on in popular culture, as expressed in comics, movies, fantasy novels, and so forth.

It was in this unscientific, uncritical atmosphere that the Fairy Investigation Society (FIS) was founded in 1927.[clxi] Imagine the situation: suppose you had once experienced a close encounter with a flying saucer, and wished to discuss it with someone who would take it seriously, and not laugh at you. At last, such an organisation appears! But the only UFO groups available were the Aetherius Society and the Raelians, both crackpot flying saucer religions.

After becoming moribund in the 1940s, the FIS began a new lease of life in the 1950, and in 1955 a fairy census was undertaken. Letters were sent to newspapers and magazines soliciting personal reports. The account of the miniature Aborigines at the commencement of Chapter 11 was received in this way, two years after the event, a tribute to how far ranging the census turned out to be.

Ultimately, a heavy burden fell on the then Secretary, Marjorie Johnson (1911—2011), whom you may remember as one of the *John O'London* witnesses. She had already been collecting reports, and now, with the encouragement of the FIS leadership, she envisaged compiling a book on the subject. It took a long time; after all, Miss Johnson had a day job, and it was only in the 1990s, when she was already a very old lady, that serious efforts were made to seek a publisher. Ironically, it was initially published in German, followed by Italian, neither language of which she could speak, and only in 2014 did the English edition of *Seeing Fairies* see the light of day under the aegis of Anomalist Books. She had already passed away three years before, at the age of 100.

Seeing Fairies is a strange work, but nevertheless one worth reading. Sometimes you can indeed tell a book by its cover. This one displays a 1934 photo of Marjorie kneeling in a clump of bracken, playing a bamboo flute in order to attract fairies. In the left foreground are two large leaves so close to the camera that they are out of focus and fuzzy. However, on the back of the photograph they are described as "nature spirits veiled in ectoplasm".

She herself claimed to have seen fairies on innumerable occasions. How many is not clear, because she repeatedly inserts the references casually and, one might say, naturally into the text as, for example, on p. 137:

The latter ones, which he mentions [referring to an author just cited], may be similar to the "spark fairies," which I used to see on the fire-back. They had a bluish aura and flew to and fro like flies, but they swelled to the size of wasps and bees while they were absorbing the essence of the dying sparks, which they carried back to the main fire.

To be fair, most of her alleged sightings are more concrete than this, and in many cases they were shared with her sister. I have no reason at all to doubt her sincerity. Her objectivity is another matter.

Proving the existence of fairies is not the aim of the book; their existence is assumed. So is their nature as "nature spirits". A display of any unusual aspect is explained by a brief reference to some book of occultism, which is accepted at face value. The author never heard of a fairy encounter which she didn't believe. To her credit, she eventually accepted the Cottingley fairy photographs are fakes. However, at a time when everybody knows about the surface of Venus, she casually mentions a person who allegedly received a visit from a Venusian at night, and another who went on an astral flight to the planet.

Under such circumstances, it would hardly be expected that the witnesses' stories would be presented with the rigour a sceptic might prefer. Only occasionally, for example, is the lapse of time between the sighting and its reporting given. On page 227 is the account of a tourist who, during an idyllic stroll on Iona, happened to briefly see a fairy. Fair enough. But the previous two pages relate how another woman regularly saw them on the same island, usually while she was resting with her eyes shut. One whole section is devoted to bedroom encounters before sleep or after wakening, or when the witness was sick, culminating in an account of a

woman who saw the most beautiful fairies while under general anaesthetic in the dentist chair. This demonstrates, says the author, that

[c]ertain drugs and gases can affect the vibrations of the human body, and when an anaesthetic is used, it causes the etheric or vital body of the patient to be partially driven out of the physical body, and this makes him or her more sensitive to superphysical vibrations… They must have utilized some of the ectoplasmic substance from her loosened etheric body, for they were of a transparent white colour [p 94].

She then goes on and refers to a scientist who used to see fairies dancing on his dining room table whenever he took a few glasses of whisky. Who would have imagined it?

From this you may assume that I regard the book as a waste of paper. On the contrary! The fact that a lot of people do claim to have seen fairies is itself a major phenomenon. Even if it could be demonstrated that they were all in the mind, that would still be an interesting avenue of psychological research. To paraphrase a comment by Simon Young in the introduction: whether fairies are a paranormal phenomenon or a psychological phenomenon, this collection of 400-odd reports from around the Anglosphere provides the best tool to make the determination. As I delved deeper into the book, it became more and more difficult to ascribe them all to one category or the other.

What sort of sightings are we looking at?

I've already mentioned the miniature Aborigines of 1955. It would be impossible to cite a typical report, but the following are a sample.

(1) Mrs. Clara Reed was described as a Christian seer and a heroine of the Coventry bombing, her sincerity confirmed by the Rev. Paul Stacy, the former vicar of St Peter's, Coventry. She claimed to have seen fairies on countless occasions. Many of them were involved with flowers, and wore dresses made of petals, while others had tunics made from the bark of trees. One was even part-bird and part-fairy, with a turkey-shaped body grass green in colour, and feet and beak-like mouth bright red. But my suspension of disbelief, which was growing ever more tenuous, finally snapped when I read the following passage:

Once, in Coventry Park where she had wandered feeling weary and depressed after the long illnesses of her husband and daughter, a fairy showed her his "domain" in the trunk of a tree. With her etheric (X-ray)

vision she saw that he had thought-built a good imitation of modern house in miniature … [p95]

Miss Johnson also once glimpsed the interior of a fairy house, but whether she did so with etheric (X-ray) vision was not stated.

Let us ratchet up the credibility factor a little.

(2) Mrs. Rosalie K. Fry described an experience when she was seven years old and her her sister nine. It was a bright sunny morning, and they were in the nursery looking down the hall to a larger hall, the two halls being joined by an archway. Just then, what looked like a piece of the finest white chiffon about 18 inches square floated very slowly down into view beyond the archway, "moving in an extraordinarily graceful, flowing manner", and then wafted out of sight. Without saying a word, the two girls rushed into the further hall, but it had vanished completely, although they were the only people there, and the object had been moving too slowly to just disappear. They looked everywhere, but it was nowhere to be found. Yes, they were children, but they both saw it, and recalled it many times in the following years, but could never think of an explanation. At the time they were convinced it was a fairy. It obviously wasn't, but what was it? [pp 155—6]

(3) When Mrs. Ellen Jackson was six years old and her sister nine, they were convinced that the water feature in their extended garden in Yorkshire must be the haunt of fairies. So, just before bedtime, at twilight, they ran down to the garden to "look for the fairies", skirted the pond and stood above a spot where the water trickled over some rocks. Much to their astonishment, they saw, sitting on a rock, three beautifully formed women, milk white in colour, completely naked, and only 18 inches to two feet high while seated. They stood watching them for a few minutes, when one of the beings caught sight of them, and pointed them out to the others. Then all three slipped into the water, and disappeared, but not before one of them reached out and retrieved from the rock the gauzy drapery presumed to be their clothes. The author continues:

My contributor pointed out that, as she and her sister were firm believers in fairies, one would be justified in thinking they had imagined them, even though they both saw the identical figures and actions, but the kind of fairies they had thought of were always those with wings and wands and brightly coloured clothes, whereas these water sprites were wingless and colourless, and of a kind unimagined by them. [pp 123-4]

(4) Thomas Shortreed of Galashiels was not only grown-up, but his grown-up son and his wife were visiting him. On the last evening of the visit, he suggested to his son that they stroll to the top of a nearby hill. Australian readers must appreciate the very long Scottish twilight, for he referred to "a very quiet, grey-dark September evening with no wind, cloud or mist". On the way back, he was most surprised to see, a few yards in front of them, a troop of figures crossing the road. They were long and lanky, all heads, arms, and legs moving in a jaunty fashion. Indeed, there were about twenty of them, the first being about six feet tall and the others sloping down until the last one was about two feet high. When they reached the stone dyke at the side, they appeared to just melt into it. He went and looked over, but they had vanished. Amazingly, his son had seen nothing. They walked another fifty yards or so when—lo and behold!—there was another troop crossing the road, only this time they were not as tall or as lively. Again, he was the only one to see them.

(5) Meanwhile, back in Oxford, Mr. and Mrs. Sinnett had finished the evening meal and were sitting beside the fire, minding their own business, when they saw

> a little fellow about seven inches high running around on the table and finally vanishing behind a jam pot. The small creature was dressed in what seemed to be a complete suit and hat, tight fitting throughout, and the colour was best described as neutral, or greeny-brown. [p. 151]

Not wanting to influence his wife, Mr. Sinnett asked her what she had seen, and her description matched his, so he was convinced it couldn't have been an hallucination.

(6) Then there are the stories so bizarre one wonders how anyone could have made them up. A botanist with degrees from two universities, referred to as L. Verdoye, wrote to her in November 1955 about some "mobile, semi-vegetable forms assuming human shape." A boy, one of his pupils, came to him and told him "in mystified consternation" the following story.

One afternoon in the summer holidays his family—himself, his father, mother, aunt, and brother—went for a picnic in the Lincolnshire woods. Feeling bored, they all took a stroll and came to a clearing, and

> there they saw some green shapes dancing in a circle, hand-in-hand. As far as L. Verdoye's pupil could estimate, they were not more than nine or nine-and-a-half inches high. No expression or features could be seen on them but all had pointed green hats, long legs and arms, "and there was,"

recounted the boy, “a sort of ‘king’ in the centre of the ring, with a light in his hand.” While the family stood petrified with fright, the ring of shapes opened and the “king” went out and sat under a large dock-leaf. He curled his legs up like a human being and fanned himself with a little leaf. [p. 115]

At this point, the boy’s father moved forward. The creatures immediately raced away towards a bank and vanished. They searched, but nothing could be found. The boy’s aunt had to look after his mother, who was having hysterics. Nevertheless, the aunt had taken a photograph of one of the beings. It had its back to the camera at the time, but when the aunt moved forward, it went around the bole of the tree and vanished. In those days photographs were pretty simple, and negatives were not necessarily preserved. The aunt refused to let it out of her possession, but the boy drew it from memory.

Typically, certain prominent items of information were not provided, such as: when it happened (presumably not long before being reported, but we don’t know how long it was before L. Verdoye wrote to Miss Johnson), the age of the boy (he probably wasn’t too young, if his teacher took him seriously), or whether Dr Verdoye confirmed the story with his parents. However, he did tell the story to “a trustworthy colleague”. The latter, no doubt delighted to get it off his chest, confessed that he had seen the same thing in the same wood. It was Midsummer Day in 1943 (tradition says this is the day the fairies are most likely to be active), and he was bird-watching at night (for owls, presumably). He saw what appeared to be identical creatures, also without any facial features, in various places among the weeds and bushes. Sometimes there were two or three together. So, having spoken to L. Verdoye, the colleague went back to the woods and

found they were teeming with the little creatures, which crawled away from the trees at dusk and went to and fro underneath the high leaves of dock, bogweed, hazel, etc., and then back again.

He felt stunned. He went into a swoon, and awoke to find himself all wet. When Verdoye met him next, he appeared “fairy-struck”.

L. Verdoye therefore decided to have a look himself. He spent two whole nights in the woods with a witness, and examined every inch of the ditch up to the bank where the family had seen the elves vanish. None of them put in an appearance. However, he did discover tiny tracks, and holes around the roots of eight or nine trees neatly carpeted with dry, unrotted leaves, in a manner that did not appear consistent with human or animal

intervention. He went back on 25 June 1956, and found dry branches and twigs stacked and tidied away in an inaccessible place.

What sort of people see fairies?

Quite a variety, as the above sample will testify. I would divide them into the following large categories:

(A) Apparently ordinary people who just happened to experience something extraordinary. This, of course, is the gold standard. Experiences people don't expect, of things they didn't believe in, carry the most weight, just as religious experiences carry more weight when they happen to unbelievers. As J. Allen Hynek said about UFOs: what do you do when perfectly credible people tell perfectly incredible stories?

(B) The same as (A), except the experience occurred when they were children (not necessarily very young) but were remembered as real events during adulthood. A surprisingly high proportion of cases fall into this category.

(C) The same as (A), except that the fairies were not visible to other members of the group. This category is smaller than the subset where all members of the group saw the entity.

(D) People claiming multiple sightings over the years, often at different sites.

(E) Self-identified "psychics" or people with "second sight".

(F) ~~New Age cranks~~ People whose encounters are mixed up with strange occult theories and beliefs.

The last three tend to overlap somewhat. In some of the cases, it is not clear whether the fairies were seen by the physical eye or the mind's eye. In a few cases, they actually asserted that they "sensed" the fairies, and in a few others, that they were "astral travelling" at the time. Lastly, we must include:

(G) People who are making up the story as a joke on someone they consider a batty old biddy. It is impossible to identify them as such. However, it would seem unlikely that every single one, or even a majority of them, fell into this category. And, as with other anomalies, if only one case is genuine, then an unknown phenomenon is present.

For the sake of argument, let us throw scepticism to the wind and assume that there really are fairies—even if we reserve our judgment about their identity as "nature spirits" or the entities of traditional beliefs. Then,

not only would we expect them to be seen, but some people would be lucky enough to see them more than once. Indeed there might be some places haunted by them so consistently that any visitor could see them. Also, if they are essentially psychic manifestations, then it would not be surprising that occasionally only one person in a party is attuned to seeing them, and some might possess the special ability of seeing them on a regular basis. I previously raised the same hypothesis concerning ghosts. And, of course, the fairy encounter might be the one factor which draws witnesses into the sort of occult theories which offer to explain it. See, everything makes sense with this presupposition.

However, when the wind wafts scepticism back, a number of questions raise their ugly heads. Firstly, considering how many people claim multiple sightings, why aren't a lot more of us seeing them? The obvious response would be that they are, but are too embarrassed to say so. But hold on a minute! Ghosts aren't supposed to exist, either, but people are not normally too backward in coming forth about their experiences in the matter. Why is it considered all right to admit to seeing a ghost, but seeing a fairy is too ridiculous to be confessed?

Secondly, I have always had reservations about so-called "psychics", because of the extreme difficulty in establishing the validity of what they claim to see or sense. However, I do note that a lot of people claim to be able to sense or see ghosts, but they practically never claim to sense or see fairies. On the other hand, none of Marjorie Johnson's correspondents ever claims to have seen a ghost. Are fairies and ghosts on two different, mutually exclusive psychic planes? Or is one—or both—a figment of the imagination?

Thirdly, a substantial minority of the "fairies" in this book possessed wings—and often gossamer type clothing as well, with occasional wands. These were *never* reported to folklorists in the olden days. Neither will you find them in Janet Bord's book[clxii], which was researched by the more conventional method of painstakingly culling the literature. It looks like many modern fairies have taken on the aspect of the children's literature for the past century or two. All of this implies a cultural, rather than a paranormal, phenomenon. So what's the explanation?

"You just imagined it!" That's what we tell our children when they come up with a wild story. Yes, children do have vivid imaginations, and often get caught up in games of make-believe. But, ultimately, they are

aware that it is make-believe. More importantly, when they reach adulthood, they don't remember the imaginary adventures of childhood as real events. In fact, I would expect the reverse to be the case: if something extraordinary happened to them when they were young, as they grew older, they would be more likely to convince themselves it was all in their imagination.

What about adults? Obviously, imagination and expectation can lead to *misinterpretations*. A flock of birds or some floating debris on Loch Ness is perceived as the Monster. An unusual predator witnessed fleetingly in the Tasmanian bush becomes a thylacine. Some draughts and creaks and mystifying light effects turn into a ghost encounter. But what could possibly be misinterpreted as a little man running around the table, or a group of twenty individuals, graded for height, crossing a road? Or, if you think they were both lying, then feel free to choose another couple of sightings. There are a lot of them where they came from.

Producing a vision out of scratch is an altogether different matter. Look, I have a vivid imagination myself, but I don't *see* what I'm imagining, let alone confuse it with reality. I have previously referred to tulpas, the visual hallucinations induced by Tibetan mystics, but they require intense and prolonged concentration and meditation; they don't just happen. Likewise, in an earlier chapter I described how, under the pressure of intense collective suggestion, individuals can be induced to see things which aren't there. However, these cases, by definition, involve groups and a highly emotional atmosphere.

For a debunker, it would be a good "out" to attribute all anomalous sightings to the imagination. If a person can imagine seeing fairies in the garden or woods, then another visitor to the woods might conjure up a bigfoot out of his imagination. (The footprints might be a different matter.) Looking up to the sky, he might not just misinterpret a strange light, but imagine a flying saucer from whole cloth. Unfortunately, most of the people who make such claims were completely surprised by what they saw, and not expecting it. Also, if the imagination can conjure up anomalous objects, then logically it cannot be restricted to them. Why not cars, or other mundane objects? How can any of us ever know what we think we see is real?

Just the same, when a woman claims to have seen fairies at every site in England where she lived, and that when she migrated to Australia, she

could see them there as well, I have great difficulty believing they were not figments of her imagination. Pretty darned good imagination, if it can make you see the same strange things everywhere you go! Crazy? That's really just an insult disguised as an explanation. A genuinely psychotic person generally suffers from free-floating, ever changing delusions, has incoherent thought and speech patterns, and can normally not take care of herself. A mental illness which leaves you completely normal except that you regularly suffer the same basic visual hallucination would be a really interesting field of study. It would also mean that none of us could be sure we were not sufferers.

Nevertheless, if we discarded all cases where we suspected, however weakly, that the witness had been in an altered psychological state at the time, and if we culled out, fairly or unfairly, all those who claimed "second sight" or more than one encounter, we are still left with a couple of hundred testimonies for which the only reason for not believing them is that they are, well, unbelievable. Even if we further reject all those whose witnesses were pre-teenagers at the time, we still have a large number of first hand accounts which would be taken seriously if they involved a crime, or some other mundane event. It is the old Hynekan quandary: what do you do when perfectly credible people tell perfectly incredible stories?

The Second Society and the Second Census

The original Fairy Investigation Society petered out, and all the members had passed on by 2013, when Simon Young, historian and folklorist, decided to resurrect it, with yours truly as a minor member. This second FIS has nothing to do with the occult; we are as much interested in folklore as in the paranormal. With respect to the latter, we keep an open mind, but not so open that our brains fall out.

From 2014 to 2017, a second fairy census was undertaken, and eventually published as a PDF[clxiii]. The earlier survey was conducted by paper and postage, while the new one involved a questionnaire on the FIS's website, which means it would only have been accessed by someone with an actual interest in the subject, albeit after being alerted to it by social media or other advertisements. The author, Simon Young concedes that a few jokes or hoaxes have crept in, but feels that the vast majority of respondents were sincere. Having read their circumstantial accounts, I am forced to agree. Of course, any individual report, no matter how seemingly

sincere, may be false, but as I have said before, we need only one to establish a new phenomenon.

This time, an effort was made to put it on a bit more scientific footing, even if the individual reports cannot be confirmed. The 500+ accounts were listed according to five geographic areas: the British Isles, North America, Europe, Australasia, and everywhere else. Within each category, the regions or states are recorded alphabetically. And yes, you will be interested to know that cases [330] to [341] hailed from New York state, but most of them were quite different from the Little People recorded by Ron Quinn.

A great boon to researchers is that every one of the first hand reports is both numbered and preceded by a rubric in italics listing the witness's sex, decade in which the encounter occurred, the decade of the witness's age at the time, and various details about the encounter, such as place, time of day, and the feelings of the witness. If you want to know, for example, whether fairies are more likely to be seen by men than women in a garden during the afternoon, you need only do a bit of bean counting. Let's have a look at some of the data.

The Witnesses

Interestingly, not many of the respondents are into the New Age movement involving strange, occult speculations. Also, very few are repeat witnesses. However, quite a large number ticked the boxes for regular or occasional supernatural experiences. The exact significance of this cannot be gauged, but surveys have established that a high proportion of the population has, or thinks they have had, such experiences. (The paranormal is like sex used to be: a lot of people are involved, but they don't talk about it.) I gain the impression that a significant proportion of the population are, to an extent, sensitive to the paranormal, and so have repeat experiences throughout life.

There is a good representation of both males and females among the witnesses, but the most striking statistic is the number of small children. Bear in mind that, with one or two exceptions, all of the respondents were adults, and since they aren't dead yet, the average age is probably in the middle years. Checking the ages of all 500 would have been a bit daunting, but I did do it for the first 100 (all in the United Kingdom). Fully 33 of them—a third of the total—had their fairy encounter at the age of ten or younger. Bear in mind, too, that most of them would not have remembered

anything before the age of three. On the other hand, the score of 14 for those aged 11 to 20 was probably consistent with the age spread of witnesses.

(Just the same, I am informed by Mr. Young that the figures for the whole English speaking world are 22% children and 16% adolescents. Interestingly, 82% of the children were females, compared to 68% for both adolescents and adults.)

A number of questions are raised by this statistic. A teacher [case 90A] told how two of the boys saw tiny lights which they interpreted as fairies, but which the teacher could not see. Are little children more sensitive to fairies? If so, are they sensitive to other paranormal phenomena? Or are they simply more prone to fantasy or misinterpretation? If so, why do they remember them vividly as real events when they grow up? As I said before, adults don't normally remember their imaginary friends as real. In fact, I suspect even the children recognize them as imaginary. Even if a real event had been involved, wouldn't it be more likely that the adult would rationalise it as something more mundane? Whichever way we look at it, there is something very strange going on.

The Circumstances

In the census about half a dozen stories can be discounted because the witness was in some sort of altered state of consciousness: sick, on her deathbed, having taken hallucinogenic mushrooms, hallucinating from sleep deprivation or, in a couple of cases, having meditated specifically in order to see fairies.

In case [163], a thirty-something Scotsman swatted at what he first thought was a large moth, before he realised it was in fact "some kind of little man, dressed in red jacket and green trousers." More than ten years later, he was still trying to come to terms with it. And where did this happen? While he was standing in line at a supermarket checkout!

This was exceptional, of course. I can also recall only one case of a sighting in a city street, but they were encountered everywhere else: indoors, in gardens, in the woods, during the day and during the night. There were multiple witness cases, prolonged observations, and cases where only one member of a group saw the fairy. One was even seen running along the bottom of a swimming pool [case 319]. In some cases, they were noticed only on developed film. However, a more typical sighting

would be as follows: a few seconds or a few minutes, the witness being alone or, if in company, the companion failed to see it, because he was simply not looking that way at the time.

A significantly large number of sightings were reported when the witness was in bed. I am always suspicious of such stories, even when the witness claims he was sure he was not asleep, or not dreaming. All sorts of strange experiences can occur at the onset or sleep or waking. But again, why do people remember these events as real? Why don't they rationalise them? If this was some sort of waking dream, why are only fairies judged to be objective? Not only that, but while dreaming, the body is incapable of moving. When the dream state gets out of synch with consciousness, producing night terrors or lucid dreams, the victim typically experiences paralysis. This was *never* mentioned in any of the bedroom encounters in the census. In many cases, it is reasonable to conclude that the witness was *not* asleep. One girl, in fact, got up to wake her sister and share the experience.

Just Plain Weird

As I've said before, it has long been my observation that people who have inexplicable experiences will tend to report them to whatever organisation appears willing to take them seriously, irrespective of whether it is consistent with the organisation's field. So, before we go into the typical fairy encounters, let's take a look at the really weird. The case numbers are in square brackets.

[80] This was the appearance of the tiny people in the miniature balloon, recorded in the last chapter.

[39] In the 2000s, a Devon woman in her forties watched a "tree man" seven feet tall, with a trunk-like body, branch-like arms, and a haggard face with short branches coming from the top of the head and sides.

[54] Also in the 2000s, another woman in her forties, this time in Hampshire, saw something that looked like a skeleton made out of sticks, but twice human height, jump out of a tree.

[276] A woman claimed to have twice seen "tree persons" or "dryads", once in Iowa and once in Baltimore. They had slender brown/grey bodies with tree branch "hair". She also claimed to have twice seen fairies in the woods.

[324] In New Hampshire in the 2000s, a twenty-something man saw what looked like an old man just two foot tall, bearing a stick like a staff, but he was made completely of twigs and leaves.

These four bizarre stories make Dr. Verdoye's "mobile, semi-vegetable forms assuming human shape" sound more plausible.

[97] Midsummer's Day in England, 2008: "a creature like a person but stretched upwards, overly thin and tall, and with its head coming to a slightly corkscrewed point with some smaller branching points coming from it. It had its back to me and was mottled brown but wreathed in a glowing greenish mist that came from it and seemed to be part of it. Part of it stretched up from the shoulders forming something vaguely wing or fan-like in shape."

[74] "a mix of frog and sparrow with a fuzzy coat all over."

[359] "It looked like a spider human hybrid with humanoid body, grey fur, multiple eyes and limbs" (several witnesses in Oregon in the 2000s.)

[289] I myself have watched a bee stuff pollen into its leg pouches, which is what bees do. But in the 1980s a teenager and her adult relatives watched an oversized bumble bee carrying a red pail the size of a thimble with its front legs.

[250] In Florida in the 2000s, a twenty-something woman claimed to have seen a coach pulled by dragonflies. (This is the story I would nominate as most likely to be a hoax.)

More Mainstream Fairies

Well, a lot of people interpreted moving balls of lights as fairies—a somewhat arbitrary interpretation, but a phenomenon which deserves investigation in its own right. Some also experienced nothing but mysterious music. There were also a few sightings which I suspect may have been simply real human beings viewed in unusual circumstances.

Otherwise, the description of the fairies are broadly similar to those recorded by Marjorie Johnson. This includes the baffling presence of wings, which play no part in traditional fairy folklore and, more to the point, they were not present in the earlier eye witness accounts. Yet they feature in almost half the sightings in this census. Among the first 100 entries, I counted 46 with wings. (And in case you are interested, they were reported by children and adults in equal proportions.) This is something new.

As far as the wingless fairies go, they were pretty much like the elves of folklore: humanoid beings ranging in height from a few inches to a couple of feet. As an example, we might take case no. [312]. In the 1970s a Missouri teenager walked into her bedroom with a towel wrapped around her after showering. She sat down on the bed intending to towel her hair when her attention was caught by a movement at the window. (I gather it was twilight outside.) A group of men just eight to ten inches high were walking along a branch, whence they jumped a small gap before continuing along her window sill. They looked like little Germans in *lederhosen*, with knobbly knees and old-fashioned hobnailed boots, and box shaped hats. She felt fear well up inside of her, and the next thing she knew she was waking up at the end of the bed, with the towel still around her, and it was totally dark outside.

By and large, the skin of these traditional fairies are white or brown, but not black. However, one little girl [case 342] saw what looked like a Santa Claus just two or three feet tall, but his skin was as red as his clothes. Also, he had tiny white horns and a red pointed tail. She was so excited, she talked about him for weeks.

You may remember from Chapter 6 the phenomenon Mary Rose Barrington labelled “jott”: the tendency for small objects to disappear and reappear, and how some people have adopted the successful approach of asking for them back. In some places, these activities are regarded as tricks of the fairies. So it was interesting to record the experience of a woman in Illinois [267]. A long zipper had gone missing, and one day she saw it in the hands of “a wee man about eighteen inches high” with brown skin and black hair, barefoot with knee length pants. When she called out at him, he suddenly vanished, leaving the zipper behind. The lady claims to have seen the same fellow on one other occasion, as well as other fairies. Interestingly, her toddler could both see and play with them.

What about the winged fairies? In many cases, the witnesses failed to describe the wings. Those who did mostly likened them to those of dragonflies, though occasionally butterfly wings were reported. One Yorkshire women said she had seen ghosts from early childhood, but didn’t believe in fairies until one afternoon she was shocked to see what looked like a woman of about twenty, with blond hair and pink skin, fly slowly across her room on “translucent shiny pink wings”, scattering pink glitter

which vanished as it floated to the floor. The fairy was seven feet tall. [Case 136]

However, the vast majority of these winged beings measured no more than a couple of inches. Theoretically, some of them might have been genuine exotic insects. However, time and again the witnesses stated, in effect: at first I thought it was an insect, but when it/I got closer, I saw … This was reported so often it is hard not to accept that they were telling the truth as they saw it.

Two witnesses (#69 in Lancashire and #234 in California) reported that the lower part of the body was like a fish ie they were tiny, winged merfolk. Does that sound like the sort of thing two people would independently make up? One seen by a little girl in Colorado had the lower part coiled up like a seahorse [242]. However, this "fairy" was so tiny, I wonder if it wasn't some sort of insect.

Michael Swords

This chapter would not be complete without a reference to Michael Swords, retired Professor of Natural Sciences, and prominent lifelong ufologist. (He and his brother had together witnessed a flying saucer at close range.) After retirement, he began a blog entitled, "The Big Study" covering mostly UFOs, but also other anomalies. Now, believe it or not, there are literally hundreds of cases of humanoids piloting UFOs, or closely associated then when they have landed. Nevertheless, any astute ufologist will soon discover many cases where no UFO was actually seen, and in which the entity does not closely resemble the UFO occupants, but rather certain figures from folklore, if you get my drift. Prof. Swords decided to catalogue them.

So when presented with the recent fairy census, he tackled them in the manner of UFO investigations: he read the first 250 cases, and winnowed them by discarding the least reliable, using criteria which he admitted were subjective, but which had worked for him in other circumstances: too young, too brief, too sleepy, too glib, or lacking detail. In the end 80 cases passed muster.[clxiv]

Of these, just under two thirds of the witnesses were female. Does that mean they are more sensitive to seeing fairies, or just less embarrassed about admitting it? Despite first appearances, they were spread more or less evenly according to age—but then again, he had rejected a great many of

the “too young” category. A lot of the encounters occurred in the twenty-first century itself! A fifth of the cases, perhaps more, involved multiple witnesses, although only one reported it. Interestingly, 25 of the 80 cases involved a “profound silence” during, and sometimes commencing before, the encounter, and ceasing with it. Such an experience is well attested in ufology: an air of changed reality, labelled the “Oz factor”, from Dorothy’s exclamation that they were “not in Kansas any more”.

As for the fairies themselves, only 9 of the 80 had wings; he apparently didn’t trust the reliability of most of the winged cases. 17 of the 18 were under a foot in height, including 7 of the 9 with wings. 7 were actually more than seven feet high, and rather weird. The rest were essentially of the classic elf or gnome appearance, with the largest subset being in the range one to three feet.

The census, of course, has not been his only source of information. For the last ten years he has been researching the literature, and has been more rigorous in his culling. What he wanted was “enough interpersonal connection between the witness and the case writer existing so that we can get comfortable with the claims.” Out of 700 cases, just 50 satisfied this demanding criterion. Of these, none had wings, none were taller than a human, none were smaller than 18 inches, and the average was three feet. Three were like fauns, six others very odd, and all the rest were of the classic Little People type.[clxv] Of course, if 50 are more or less trustworthy, it doesn’t mean that all the rest as false.

He refers to this file as LEPRECAT, for “leprechaun catalogue”, and if you want to read the whole 50 cases, they are readily available on his blog. The whole of 2020 is given over to them.[clxvi]

CHAPTER 19

So, Should We Believe in Fairies?

How often does something weird have to be reported before we accept that something weird is going on? Naturally, we must remember the obvious: you can't believe everything people tell you. But the corollary is also true: you can't disbelieve everything. In the case of the second census, if we confine ourselves to what grown-ups claim to have seen in broad daylight then, without any evidence, declare half of them to be either liars or incompetent witnesses, we are still left with a lot of testimonies from people who would be taken seriously if they were witnesses to a crime. When we go beyond the census to the other evidence recorded here, we realise that the phenomenon is world wide, and that similar reports are being made quite independently, by witnesses, most of whom were not thinking in terms of fairies.

I began this research with the knowledge that something unusual was going on, but not actually believing in fairies. Have I now changed my mind? Have you? Should we now believe in fairies?

But the word, "fairy", of course, carries a lot of baggage. And you will notice the complete absence of something fundamental to the fairy folklore: magic powers. The little people exhibit none of them. In fact, they hardly bother to interact with humans at all—another variance from the folkloric picture.

Perhaps I should ask another question: should we believe in dragons? The word is Greek, and the classical dragon was simply a gigantic snake, nothing more. Later, the word got applied to other mythological reptiles, such as the Anglo-Saxon *worm* (German *Wurm*, Norse *orm*), essentially a gigantic lizard with huge bat wings, which broods over its treasure. It represented the spirit of the dead hero in his barrow, guarding his grave goods, its fiery breath emblemic of all-consuming death. Then the word was applied to the Chinese *lóng* or *lung*, a magical spirit creature with power over water, depicted as a long snake with four clawed legs, the head of a horse or camel, the antlers of a deer, and often bits and pieces of other

animals as well. When humans went out into the real world, they named the world's biggest lizard the Komodo dragon, while the eighteen inch Agamid lizards sunning themselves on my front yard are called bearded dragons.

I would suggest that the beings recorded here have as much to do with fairies as big lizards in Indonesia and little lizards in Brisbane have to do with dragons: Nothing! In my view we must completely dissociate the fairies of folklore and literature with the "fairies" people claim to be seeing. There is no reason to connect the two except a general similarity in shape. No doubt, in former times, if someone saw one of these beings, he would interpret it as a fairy or elf. Indeed, random sightings of this nature may have contributed to the popular idea of fairies, but that is about all.

So what are they? They cannot be biological. I have already explained why the micro-ufonauts of Malaysia would be unable to maintain body temperature or water balance in the same fashion as a human being, and could not possess human brain power. Scaling them up to a foot or two in height would improve matters, but not much. Also, they couldn't just pop up out of nowhere in ones and twos; there would need to be an organized society producing food, clothing, and other essentials.

Anything beyond that is speculation. It doesn't even rise to the level of hypothesis or theory. Human nature doesn't like that sort of thing. We don't like loose ends. When faced with something beyond our ken, we prefer to tie it up with some neat explanation, and then treat the problem as solved. Eventually we end up with a massive edifice of speculation resting on a minuscule foundation of fact, and taken as received wisdom. This will not do. We must accept that we are facing a mystery which has no answers within the paradigm under which we now exist. Nevertheless, I shall float a few ideas, with the proviso that we understand that they are mere speculations, but hopefully pointing in the direction we should look.

In my opinion, these things are part of a parallel immaterial realm. Unlike the material we are used to, they are not made of atoms, but something else impossible to define. If you like the term, they are "spirits", but even that word carries a lot of unnecessary baggage; not every type of "spirit" might be the same. They are intelligent, in the sense that they can interact with their environment voluntarily, and their intelligence is probably closer to that of a human than an animal. But they are visible to us only on very rare occasions, as psychic projections—like ghosts, or tulpas.

With respect to ghosts, the problems raised is why they resemble the shape of the deceased body, why they are clothed, and how they are able to make sounds. With "fairies" the problems are even deeper:

- Why does an immaterial "fairy" even manifest in a humanoid form, why (usually) small, and why clothed?
- How come they can occasionally leave footprints, or even be held in the hand? Are they somehow able to materialise to some extent?

I am particularly puzzled by the insect-winged beings, because they appear to be a relatively new phenomenon, starting about the time they began appearing in children's literature. They weren't reported when folklorists were chasing genuine fairy beliefs in the nineteenth century. How can popular culture produce such a thing? Of course, we know that people's *interpretation* of what they see is culture bound. It has often been pointed out that UFO aliens would have been interpreted as goblins or devils in previous centuries. But if we ignore interpretations, and stick simply to what is being reported, the fact still remains: people are reporting insect-winged beings when they weren't doing so before. If they had seen them in the past, why weren't they incorporated into the fairy mythology?

I refuse to believe that popular culture can cause hallucinations of aspects of the culture. First of all, certain images are embedded into the culture even deeper than fairies: devils with cloven feet and horns, and angels in white robes with white eagle wings, but *they* do not get reported—at least not by people in their normal state of consciousness. Yes, I suppose they might be seen and not reported, but if so, why not? It would be less embarrassing to report a casual sighting of an angel than of a fairy. They certainly don't get reported where you would expect them: when people are giving their testimonies at church or in evangelical rallies. As a matter of fact, I remember an old episode on daytime TV (? Oprah? Sally Jessie Raphael?) devoted to people who claimed to have encountered angels. In every case, they were strangers who unexpectedly came to their aid, and which they assumed were heavenly messengers. But in every case they were indistinguishable from normal human beings; not a single white feather anywhere!

Secondly, as I pointed out before, if you accept the proposition that normal people, under normal circumstances, can have hallucinations of paranormal beings just out of the blue, where will it end? They could just as

easily hallucinate more mundane things, such as cars or people. We would never be confident of our grip on reality.

Getting back to speculations, let me cast three other ideas into the ring. Why are they observed much less often than ghosts? One possibility is that they really are much rarer. Another is something I hinted at before: that the operate on a different psychic wavelength. Psychic observation, after all, implies some sort of meeting of minds. A ghost has, or had, a human intelligence. These beings do not.

Secondly, with some dramatic exceptions I shall discuss later, they are essentially indifferent to human beings. This should be obvious; in the presence of humans they normally just ran away. Who knows? Perhaps they are largely incapable of interacting with us. It may even be that they find it just as difficult to observe our world as we do theirs.

Finally, I shall be so bold as to claim that what we label fairies, elves, or the like, is just a subset of immaterial beings which happen to resemble us in some manner, but there exists a much larger population of diverse immaterial beings of which we are unconscious. Why do I say this? Go back to the last chapter, and reread the bizarre cases in the section, “Just Plain Weird”.

In the following chapter, I shall do a quick runaround of more weird apparitions which nobody expected.

PART IV

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

CHAPTER 20

Very Strange Apparitions

Two time Academy Award winner Shelley Winters (1920—2006) appeared in three or four films every year from the 1940s to the 1970s, before slowing down to one or two a year over the following two decades. Then, in a television interview in 1991, she told a remarkable story about her experience after a party at the neighbour's house in Malibu, California during the Second World War.[clxvii]

Something was coming out of the ocean. "I saw emerging what I thought was a frogman [she said]. I thought the Japanese might be invading, but he was too tall to be Japanese."

It was, in fact, a red, humanoid creature, which came right up to her and put its webbed hands around her. At that point—"I was a very sexy woman then. So I looked into his eyes. I am not sure physically what happened next but I felt all tingly. It was a very special feeling." The creature then returned to the sea.

Why would a movie star make up a ridiculous story like this? Yes, we know some people will do anything for their fifteen minutes' of fame, but with 60 odd films under her belt, one would have thought she had had her quota, and didn't need to risk making a laughing stock of herself. Or perhaps she really did think that, in her old age, it was time to get that encounter off her chest.

Remember my adage that, even if a story is totally fantastic, you should file it away in case another one comes along. A few years later, I heard that Dr. David Heppell, a specialist in molluscs in the Royal Museum of Scotland, was detailed to sort out the museum's mermaid collection or, to be more correct, the artificial mermaids of the nineteenth century constructed of monkey bodies, fish tails, and so forth. I sent him a photo of very unusual one and, since he was also collating the accounts of mermaid sightings, of which there are more than you would expect, I enquired about that. He then provided me with the following story, provided to him by the mother of the witness.

The family lived in Melbourne, but in 1989 they bought some land at Bundaberg, Queensland, and went up for a holiday. One afternoon, after fishing off the beach, the parents went home to prepare dinner, but the son of the family, Shane decided to stay longer. 26-year-old Shane was a body builder and security guard and, according to his mother, a very down to earth person who would not say anything that was not true. However, when he returned from the beach, he was bubbling over from what he had seen.

After about one or two hours Shane thought it was getting late, just on twilight, and he had better go home. He packed up his line, *etc*., and, when he stood up to go, this beautiful being was walking at the edge of the surf. He was about 6ft high—green scales, instead of skin, and webbing (like ducks') on hands and feet. A fin reached from his wrist to the waistline. Also, a fin from the centre of the forehead reached down the back. He seemed to speak telepathically, saying 'We are watching you—do not be afraid'. He lifted his hands above his head and crossed his hands as he seemed to speak. As Shane moved closer he moved back slowly, then stopped. Then Shane stayed in the one position. When Shane made no movement he just stood there. Shane thinks it was about a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes he was there. Then he put his arms by his side, and dived into the sea, and swam just the same as the dolphin swims. Shane ran closer to watch him swim. He was about 25 to 30 yards away from Shane at that time.

What's going on here? It is impossible that biological entities such as this can exist in the sea. Apart from the fact that they are not obviously equipped for submarine life, they clearly have no relationship with any of the other marine life forms. I have heard other stories of mer-folk, but do not have the time to search the original sources and judge their credibility. In any case, this chapter is intended as simply an introduction to what appears to be a vast corpus of mysterious apparitions.

What They Told the Ufologists

As you will have gathered by now, if you see something really strange, the ufologists will at least be prepared to listen to you. In 2011, a branch of the Mutual UFO Network received a letter from someone in Bismarck, North Dakota. For more than a year their home had been visited by mysterious entities which would arrive erratically, and completely silently, and would touch the father of the house on his lower limbs, and apparently

jumped on their beds at night. Two of the male residents had seen them. They were whiter than white, walked on pointed hind limbs, and had long tails and cat-faced mouths. Anyone who hit or touched them would be stunned until they passed. The family bought a pit bull terrier to drive them away, but it only ended up being a nervous wreck.[clxviii]

One would have liked to have received more detailed descriptions of their appearance and behaviour. (For example, how tall were they, and what about their forelimbs?) It would also have been useful if someone had investigated it. However, I imagine that ufologists are not thick on the ground in North Dakota, they all have day jobs, and the creatures' visits could not be predicted. Them's the breaks!

> "It's sort of difficult to try and explain this to anybody and have them not think you are making it up, or that you're from the loony bin."

This was the opening statement by an interviewee for John Timmerman, who took the photo exhibit of the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) around 92 malls in the United States between 1980 and 1992. In the process, he heard so many stories that, after the first two malls, he brought along a tape recorder and taped the witnesses. Mostly, what he heard were conventional UFO reports—if "conventional" can be used for such a subject. This one was different. It had nothing to do with UFOs, but when you've had a really weird experience, and a stranger is prepared to listen, you might as well get it off your chest.

It was at West Indianapolis, Indiana in 1977. The witness was standing in his living room, minding his own business, when he felt "a charge in the air", a tingling all over his skin, and the hair on the back of his neck stand on end. He felt he had to turn and look behind him. There, emerging from a line in thin air was the upper arm, shoulder, and part of the torso of something non-human. There may have been a small coloured glow to the line, which appeared to form the boundary between, well, this world and somewhere else. Almost at once, the thing disappeared back behind the line.

A year and a half later, the same thing happened.

Interestingly, Timmerman didn't ask exactly what the creature looked like. Perhaps it was best not to know.[clxix]

While we're discussing this sort of thing, In 2004 a Californian called Sean contacted the *Fortean Times* magazine and described an incident from a few years before. He was with a group of about 20 or 30 actors and film staff crammed into a flat, drinking and partying, and taking the occasional marijuana. It was about 11.30 at night, and he was listening to some music while a friend played a video game. Suddenly, he noticed something move near the door of a small closet under the stairs, which people used as a "hotbox" ie a place to smoke marijuana, where the smoke can't escape.

Something like a black tentacle swept out from underneath it, swished around, as if grabbing for something, and then retreated. It was a matt colour, without the sort of reflection you would get from something slimy, and it wasn't a cat's tail, snake, or remote controlled prop. Sean said that, although he was perfectly functional under the influence of marijuana, he would have written it off as an hallucination, except that he locked eyes with his friend, Ryan. He asked her if she had seen the same thing. She had. They got the heck out of there.[clxx]

According to the 'Childhood Beliefs' site[clxxi], a large number of children believe there are monsters under the bed at night. Makes you think, doesn't it?

Black Dogs

Black dogs are a widespread aspect of British fairy folklore: spectral dogs which, as the name applies, are black, but typically also shaggy, and the size of a calf, and frequently with fiery eyes. The size alone sets them apart from, for example, someone's pet labrador on a frolic of its own. For that matter, it even distinguishes itself from the ghost of a regular dog which happened to once have been black. When I read about them in *A Dictionary of Fairies* by Britain's leading folklorist on the subject[clxxii], I naturally filed them away with the leprechauns, cluricauns, brownies, bogles, and the like, as fanciful creations of the communal imagination.

So imagine my surprise to discover that Janet and Colin Bord devoted a long (35 pages) chapter entitled, 'Mysterious black dogs' in their book, *Alien Animals*[clxxiii]! And with 178 endnotes as well; no-one can say that the Bords don't document their material! Much of this involves traditional tales, but a lot of first hand reports were also included.

Thus, in 1952, an Irishwoman called Margo Ryan was walking along a quiet country road at midnight when a huge black dog began to walk beside

her. It was so peaceable and friendly that she twice reached out to pat it, and her hand went through it. Then it walked out in front of her and vanished into thin air. In Norfolk, a man struck at a black dog with his walking stick, and the stick also went through it. A number of similar cases were cited, including two in the United States, but it is not clear from the text whether the reports were first hand.

The authors go into a great amount of detail about other encounters. Without delving into the primary documents, I would not be able to separate out, to my own satisfaction, those reports which appear both genuine and paranormal, but it is clear that a lot are. Fortunately, Prof. Michael Swords has done the job for us[clxxiv].

As well as the Margo Ryan encounter, which he repeated, he recorded another woman who had a black dog as tall as her shoulder pass close by her in broad daylight, and then walk straight through an iron gate as if it were mist. Yet another woman, this time in England, had a large black dog follow her, so she hit at it with her umbrella, only to nearly faint when the implement "went clean thruff 'im".

What other cases? In 1930 one night a Derbyshire woman was approached by a black dog the size of a large collie. When she attempted to pat it, her hand went right through it. The dog also passed through an iron fence. The same thing happened one night to a police chief, John Stewart in 1955 in Scotland. A large dog seemed to come through a fence, and when he tried to stroke it, his hand also passed right through it.

These are by no means the most fantastic accounts he was able to dig up, but you get the general idea. He concluded that the Black Dog phenomenon does exist, but reports of blazing red eyes relate to earlier, less reliable, folkloric accounts. Some correspondents to the *Fortean Times* magazine would beg differ. In 2000 Mr. G. E. Thompson told how, one midnight four years before, he, his wife, and his 19 year old daughter encountered a huge dog which stood snarling at them as they walked fearfully past. "To cap it all," he said, "it had glowing read eyes. There was no way it could have been a trick of the light, as the house lights were behind it." This was in Norfolk, England. Back home, his wife picked up a magazine and read an article about a phantom dog in Norfolk which fitted the description exactly. Ironically, it was supposed to be an omen of bad luck, and he affirmed that since that night they had had nothing but bad luck.[clxxv]

Frightening as that event may have been, it was nothing compared to what "JD" and a friend experienced. In the early 1990s he (I'm guessing JD was male) was living in Nottingham, with a line of blackberry bushes behind the house. One night they went out to investigate a strange noise emanating from the bushes, only to see a black fog shoot out and arc into the air. As it descended, it took on the form of a great black, doglike thing, four and a half feet tall and three feet wide, with "huge fangs dripping with saliva".

It landed with a thud—in other words, it acted like something solid—began a deep growl, then opened its eyes. They were huge, glowing red, and piercing, as if with a baleful intelligence. They stood rooted to the spot, until the monster stepped slowly forward. At that point, they bolted for the house, locked the door, and had a fit of the horrors. JD's friend never came back to the house, while JD never went into the back garden again, left the place 18 months later, and "spent years terrified of the dark".[clxxvi]

Several other "black dog" stories were told to the magazine that year (2004). While it is tempting to suspect that they were inspired to copy one another in making things up, they were all quite different. One sounded like it might have been a flesh and blood animal after all, and another was almost certainly the manifestation of a sleep disorder. But the one told by "Anon" was in a class of its own.

At the age of five or six years, he (?) and his brother were playing a game of wrestling with their feet, when suddenly a small black Scottish terrier jumped out of the interior wall, looking just as confused as they were. Their own dog, asleep on the sofa, didn't bat an eyelid—at least not until the author ran screaming upstairs to his mother. He also said that, for years, his brother always denied it had happened, until "recently", when they were adults. When asked what happened to the little dog, his brother told him it simply disappeared. "Anon" ended by saying: "Whatever it was, it made me shit my tiny young pants!"[clxxvii]

Flying Humanoids

Writers of science fiction typically have poor understanding of biology, and never more so than when inventing "birdmen" or winged humanoids. Now, prehistoric flying reptiles once existed which were much heavier than human beings, so I will not claim that such imaginative creatures would be too heavy to fly. What I will affirm is that they would

require vastly greater wingspans than those with which they typically depicted—certainly much bigger than those traditionally ascribed to angels which, being spirits, are presumably immune to the effects of gravity.

So when I first heard about Earl Morrison's experience in Vietnam in 1969 I was not impressed. As he told it three years later, he was on guard duty at Da Nang with two other marines when, about one or 1.30 in the morning, they saw something approaching from the air. At first it appeared like a gigantic bat, but as it got closer, they saw that it was a naked woman, normally formed, and well developed, with straight hair, and wings growing out of her arms. And she was black—skin, hair, and wings—but surrounded by a greenish glow. Without making a sound, she flew right over the top of their heads, only six or seven feet away. Only when she was about ten feet or so away did they start to hear her wings flap, and they watched as she flew off into the night.[clxxviii]

A likely story, you might think. Biologically, the thing was impossible. Yet it is not the only account of flying humanoids. The first one doesn't actually refer to wings, but the thing flew by some method, and was absolutely terrifying.

According to Colby Pope, they were children at the time, in 1981, and although their ages were not mentioned, they were obviously old enough not to require adult supervision. He and his sisters were with a group of friends picnicking in Bluebell Wood, outside Caddington, near Luton, England. Halfway through the picnic, one of his friends, called Gary, pointed out a very dark creature about eight foot tall.

It had red eyes, pointy ears on top of its head and seemed to be a cross between man, bird and bear. It started gliding towards us and seemed to be levitating on a yellow light.[clxxix]

Then followed a vivid and detailed account of their panic-stricken flight out of the wood, across a cornfield, and through a gap in an iron grid protecting a tunnel under the highway, and how they heard the iron grate being shaken behind them, along with an awful screeching noise.

The next example was certainly flying, but without wings. One July in the late 1990s, Mrs. Elaine Towns and her husband attended a retirement party in Devon, England. It being a warm evening, several of the members were chatting in the garden, when Mrs. Towns looked up and saw the dark shape of what appeared to be a man moving steadily and silently across the light evening sky. She guessed it was in the region of 60 to 100 feet up, and

it was wearing what appeared to be a rucksack, and was standing upright. Just the same, it was moving west to east in a relaxed, but apparently purposeful manner, but without any obvious means of propulsion, such as jets, wings, or parachute. She and her husband, with whom she discussed the sighting later, were convinced it wasn't a balloon, and they were surprised that nobody else noticed it. Perhaps there is a mundane explanation, but it isn't obvious.[clxxx]

In the last few decades something very strange appears to have been happening in the vicinity of Rockford, Illinois—at least, according to Lon Strickler, who has written a couple of books on winged cryptids, and operates the "Phantoms and Monsters" blog. This blog had attracted a number of witnesses to come forth.

An elderly lady, recorded only as "SS" was with her husband and a friend on the friend's porch one evening in 1999 when they saw a dark grey humanoid glide towards a nearby tree. It was seven feet long, with two defined legs, and two long, bat-like wings attached to its arms. It was close enough for her to notice its small cat-like ears and intense red eyes. After perching on the tree, it glided or flew towards two pine trees, its legs kicking up and down, passed between the trees, and just vanished.[clxxxi]

In case you suspect this was a flesh-and-blood animal, a survivor from the Age of Dinosaurs, it must be emphasized that a thing that size would require an absolutely gigantic wingspan—probably something like the 23 feet of a male *Pteranodon*, the most common of the giant flying reptiles.

Another woman, known only as "E.J." contacted Lon and reported how, one summer evening in 2004, she had been standing on the deck in her backyard at Loves Park, next to Rockford, when she heard a lot of dogs barking.

As I turned and looked towards the direction of the barking it was at that moment that an all black 7ft in length man with huge bat-like wings flying across the park that borders along my backyard. It then descended to approximately 5 or 6ft above ground. It pulled or folded its wings in slightly and then glided along the paved path that runs through the park. It continued gliding through an easement between two houses disappearing from my sight[clxxxii].

Shortly afterwards she heard a lot of screeching.

Lon said that this was the third report he had heard from the area. His fourth report was from a woman called "KJ". This time it was about 6 a.m.

in the late summer of 2017, and the light was excellent. She happened to see a tall, dark, almost black manlike being *walking* in a yard of a house just a block away, in the city of Rockford. All of a sudden, it produced a broad set of wings and glided over the gate to disappear in the trees on the next block.[clxxxiii]

Lon also logged a several dozen reports of winged humanoids from inside Chicago itself, the largest city in Illinois[clxxxiv]. However, my last example comes from another source.

It was at O'Hare Airport, Chicago on Sunday 31 May 2020. At 7.30 a.m. a Boeing 777-200ER had just landed, and was taxiing towards Terminal 2, when the pilot, who preferred anonymity, caught sight of something from the corner of his eye. Turning his head, he saw a black creature like a thin human being, at least six feet high, with wings outstretched as in the gliding position, flying upwards. Only about four seconds elapsed before the entity passed out of his line of sight, but it was enough time for him to alert his co-pilot, who also caught a fleeting glimpse. It turned out other pilots had seen it, or knew someone who had. [clxxxv]

Dog-Headed Men

But of all the weird apparitions, the weirdest of all were the dog-headed men. To be sure, I know of only a single venue for these stories, but between 2001 and 2006, various people posted on the *Fortean Times* message board, or e-mailed the magazine directly, tales of encounters by them, or someone close to them, of beings just like male human beings, but with dogs' heads. A whole chapter is given over to them in the fifth volume of *It Happened to Me!* Why the reports were unique to this venue is something we might ponder. Perhaps because the subject was so fantastic, the witnesses were only prepared to come forth—and then sometimes only anonymously—once the first one had spoken up. Or perhaps there was some other reason.

For instance, the following anonymous (alleged) witness stated that he (or she) was inspired by reading a previous account. In any case, the witness was one of two ten year old children playing near some factories in Manchester, England one summer morning, when they noticed two figures approaching, silhouetted against the sun. At first they thought they were their parents, but then they saw that, while one figure was normal, the other

had a dog's head. It was obviously a real head from the detail, and the way it moved. They ran for their lives.

Of course, their parents didn't believe them, but because the children were clearly "spooked", they called the police. The police managed to catch up with a man whom the kids identified as the normal member of the couple. This man actually confirmed their story. He told them he had met the dog-headed man on the banks of the canal, and had been following him to see if he were real, but the dog-man eluded him. For some reason, neither the police or the parents believed the story.[clxxxvi]

There were nineteen stories in the collection. In three of them, the witnesses managed to establish that they had been cases of misidentification. Of the others, all but a couple took place at night—but obviously, the lighting was sufficient for them to be certain of what they saw. All but a couple were children at the time, although they remembered it as a real event in adulthood. As I pointed out in Chapter 18, one would expect that most adults would rationalise away a fantastic childhood experience. If people were making it all up, why would they be so consistent about these two factors, because they are not necessary to the story?

Finally, one woman told about how, when she was a rebellious teenager of about 15, she met a fellow in his late 20s who told her he was a practitioner of ancient magic. He began to stalk her. His last appearance was in the middle of the night, when she was sound asleep, and her father answered the door. Like any other father, he told the fellow where to go in an uncomplimentary manner, and attempted to physically remove him.

At that point, the guy transformed himself into a dog-headed man, said something in another language, and then vanished into this air[clxxxvii].

The author related that, although her father hadn't seen the inside of a church as long as she knew him, he got the local clergyman to come and bless both the house and the family. Whether it really happened, she said, it left him emotionally scarred for a long time.

What does all this mean? There is no need to believe every case history in this chapter, just to accept that some of them are probably true. Nor are they unique. If I had the space, I could relate a diverse lot of other very peculiar apparitions. Add to this the tree men, stick men, corkscrew heads, and other "just plain weird" apparitions recorded in Chapter 18.

There seems to be a whole parallel immaterial realm which is visible to us only on rare occasions. If the members which come into view resemble folkloric entities, we call them fairies, but they are really a small sub-set of immaterial entities. What they might be is anybody's guess, but it seems that most of them are indifferent to us.

But not all. As we shall see in the next chapter, there is some that you definitely should not want to encounter.

CHAPTER 21

Goblins, Monsters, and Unholy Things

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them.

3. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

Since we have already discussed the Little People of the harmless kind, we may as well begin now with one of the most extraordinary reports which has come my way. I have been in regular contact with the lady involved, I know her name, and the street, almost to the house, where the experience occurred. However, she has requested complete confidentiality in these matters. Therefore, I shall simply condense the account, which she has published in full in both 2004[clxxxviii] and 2015.[clxxxix]

In 1984, a divorcée resident in Queensland, Australia had flown home from a seminar in New Zealand, and was driven to her house by a colleague from the same seminar. Having slept on the journey home, she was awake and refreshed by the time she arrived at about half past nine at night. With the children under the care of a neighbour, she looked forward to some "me time". But first she decided to unpack.

The wardrobe in the bedroom stood about half a metre from the end of the bed, and opened with two sliding doors. She had to slide them both to the left in order to throw her clothes into the right hand side. But there was a peculiar atmosphere in the room. The light appeared abnormally bright, and she suddenly felt unnaturally exhausted. She staggered back on top of the bed and passed out.

The next thing she knew, she was awakened by voices apparently calling to one another to hurry. Raising her head, she saw at least half a dozen small people—"gnomes" she called them, though I think "goblins" would be a better term. Both male and female, they stood two to two and a half feet high, with stout, robust, heavily built bodies overdressed for the hot climate. The females wore scarves wrapped under their chins, and the

men had no beards or other facial hair. Their faces were vaguely Caucasian, but with weather-beaten, muddy skin, and prominent bones, but they appeared “squashed”, as if a heavy weight on the top had compressed their heads vertically. Also, now the *left* side of the cupboard was open, and *they were trying to drag her into it*.

All this she noted quite dispassionately. She thinks she was under some sort of mind control. Instead of being scared, she thought that, after all, it would take a long time for them to move her, and she went back to sleep. Next time she awoke, there were more of them, and her position was reversed ie her head was now where her feet had once been. Again, she lost consciousness, only to be woken by their argumentative voices. This time, she was back in her original orientation, but her legs were almost completely off the bed, and she was about to slide into the wardrobe.

At that, adrenaline took over. In anger, rather than fear, she leaped to her feet and started yelling and kicking. The goblins muttered among themselves, then filed into the open wardrobe, and disappeared as if descending some sort of ramp. The light was still unnaturally bright.

The lady headed off down the corridor. As soon as she reached the living room, the spell was broken. At once, she was overwhelmed with terror. She phoned her colleague, who collected our outside the house. He told her that, from the time we had left her until the moment she phoned, only about a quarter of an hour had elapsed.

Ten years later, he daughter, now aged twenty, finally admitted that she and her twin brother used to see the goblins, but never told her, because they knew they would not be believed. They never used to walk down the corridor, but always gathered their courage and ran, because they had worked out that the bedroom wardrobe and the corridor linen press, with which it shared a wall, were the foci of the phenomenon.

Do I believe this fantastic story? I don’t disbelieve it. As I read it, I found it more and more difficult to write it off as some sort of sleep disorder. The accounts the woman gave eleven years apart agree in all substantial details, without any of the embellishments one would expect from a hoax or mental derangement. She is also absolutely committed to anonymity. One thing she is not is a publicity hound.

She told how, a couple of decades after the event, she started looking for answers. She discovered that a lot of UFO occupants were dwarfs, but they didn’t fit the bill. In 2004, however, she did contact UFO Research

Queensland and, although they couldn't cast much light on the problem, she did permit them to publish the story anonymously. I have confirmed that they did, in fact, run the story in their journal, *UFO Encounters*, no. 216 of Feb.-March 2004. Ironically, just as the article was going to press, the organization received a phone call from a woman in Melbourne who also had goblins or elves in her house. The same year, the lady posted her story on the *Fortean Times* message board. Later, she discovered the E.L.F.E.N. Project, in which the organizer, calling himself Professor B. claimed to have a case load of 60 people in the U.S. and Canada who had experience with such entities. (I read his website at the time, but it is no longer available.)

Finally, in 2015, she discovered a minor blogger, yours truly, who was both a compatriot, and took such things seriously. Now, my e-mail address is not present on the relevant blog; she had to search my other blogs before she could locate a means of contacting me. It seems her motive was simply to get it off her chest, and to see if I could provide some sort of explanation. (She was out of luck there.) When I asked permission to publish it, she immediately rewrote it to remove three items: her first name (she hadn't given me her last), her year of birth, and the suburb where the event took place. They were never sufficient to identify her in any case but, as I said, she is quite single minded on the need for anonymity. Later, she told me about the various paranormal or psychic events she has experienced over her life. Again, this was just to have someone to confide in; she asked that they not be published, and I have honoured her request. The only comment I can make is that they were not extraordinary as far as the paranormal goes, and it reinforces my belief that people who see apparitions tend to sensitive to such things.

All of this is consistent with a person who has been attempting to understand, and come to terms with, a baffling experience.

Later, I came across another account which bore an eerie similarity to the above. An American who preferred to remain anonymous described what had befallen his or, more likely, her older brother, who appears to have been a paranormal magnet or, if you want to put it another way, a sensitive. At the age of 27, he was having some uncanny experiences in his new home, and it was at that point that he told the author what had happened to him at the ages of about five to eight.[cxc]

A couple of times, while in bed, he had seen "a big tall shadow man—his eyes were big and black and he had a bone-like face that was in a shape

of a square." He rolled over and closed his eyes, and it felt like he was levitating. The second time the shadow man arrived, it was proceeded by footsteps, but he didn't levitate. Of course, all this might be written off as some sort of sleep disorder. However, describing the worst experience nearly brought him to tears , and scared his sibling so much that he or she slept on the couch with the lights and TV on.

He had awoken to find himself surrounded by a group of little shadowy people about two feet high, who tied a rope around his neck and pulled him out of bed and through the house. Unable to scream, he groped around at anything to protect himself. The rope was pulling him towards the open front door, but somehow he managed to get hold of a pair of scissors and cut it. Then he fled to his mother's room and fell asleep on her bed. When he woke up the next morning, there was an imprint of a rope around his neck. Of course, his mother didn't believe his story.

What are we supposed to make of that? The "rope" couldn't have been physical, because it wasn't on his neck in the morning. But what about the imprint? Could it have been a nightmare so terrifying that it left a psychosomatic mark? Has anyone ever heard of such a psychosomatic effect? The fact that he experienced other paranormal phenomena might suggest that this was another example. What would have happened to him, or the woman attacked by gnomes, if they had succeeded? Is there any record of people vanishing from their bedrooms during the night, never to be seen again?

More Goblins

That last story came from the "Castle of Spirits" website, although it didn't really deal with ghosts. The same can be said for the report by a Texan woman who initially used the same name as that prolific writer of folk songs, limericks, and jokes: Anonymous, when telling about the strange events on a long dirt road on which her house was situated. At eight o'clock one morning she went for a walk down the road with her three sons, aged three, five, and twelve respectively, only to be stopped about twenty yards from the house by a woman running into the middle of the road.

Despite the absence of any other house within ten miles, and despite the heat, she was clad in a full length, long sleeved, hooded cloak, with her face painted black with what appeared to be mud, and her feet bare. Four pit bull terriers sat by her side, as she began dancing, jumping around,

chanting, and waving a branch. The family retreated to their home. Although her behaviour was odd, I suspect this was a real woman performing some sort of ritual which made sense to her. It was what happened on the walk later in the day which was really weird.

As the mother bent to retrieve a child's dropped sandal, her five year old uttered a blood curdling scream. His face was pale, and he had lost control of his bladder. There, about twenty feet on the side of the road were four little men only two to two and a half feet high, wearing white, handmade type clothing, with pointed hats as on a garden gnome. (Isn't it amazing how often this feature turns up?) And they were drinking from puddles of water, while speaking and joking. By their side stood a larger one, dressed all in black. The author gave a shout of amazement. At that, the big one picked up the smallest (he was only about two feet high) and set him on his shoulders, then spoke to the others, and they all walked off into the tall grass. She concluded:

Since then I have seen them on several occasions around my home just watching me although I am scared I am also equally curious as to what they are. They do however cause a little mischief from time to time it is never anything serious only like they want my attention[cxci].

In hindsight, I wonder if the woman in red knew about the little people, and her ritual somehow concerned them.

In any case, eight months later, when the author had the confidence to write a follow-up account under her own name, Jennifer Lozano, matters had changed radically. Up to then, the little people had been rather shy. She mentioned that their heads were large in proportion to their skinny bodies, and that the smallest one was treated almost like a child by the others, and that his face was black (and what colour were the others'?) About two weeks before she wrote the follow-up, Mrs. Lozano was watching them watching her, before going to bed. The next morning there were tiny muddy footprints on on the lawn and patio. What happened next is best described in her own words.

> Later that night I was sitting on the sofa with my kids and I caught a quick flash of something run past the large windows in the front of our home. I decided it had to have been one of the many stray dogs in the area and continued watching the movie. It was not even a minute later that I began to feel like something was looking at me. It was nothing like the times I had seen them; this was a very evil

feeling. I was filled with fear and didn't want to look but I made myself and what I saw made me give a silent scream and I swear my entire body felt like a bucket of ice was just poured on me. There hovering about three feet off the ground was a little person but this time his eyes were huge and glowing like a cat's. The worst part though was the horrible smile on its face. His mouth was very wide and went from his ear to his other ear and was opened in an evil smile type laugh showing off rows of shark like teeth. I didn't hear him out loud but it was more like he was putting it in my head and I could hear his laughing and chanting in some strange words that I had never heard of before. I began to close my eyes at this point and prayed for God to help me and to protect my children form whatever this thing was. When I opened my eyes I was sure he would be gone but he was still there and he was laughing even harder at me. I got up and led my kids to the back room to watch the television in there. At this point I was so afraid that this thing was going to find a way into my home and I did not need a psychic to tell me that it wanted to hurt us.

When it was time for bed a few hours later I had calmed down and was doing a great job of convincing myself that I had seen something else and my eyes were just playing off lights of something. I laid down in bed and just as I began to get comfy I heard something hit my roof hard. Then it sounded like something running across the roof and went quiet. I asked my husband if he had heard it and he nodded that he did and motioned for me to be quiet so we could hear. A few minutes later we were sure it was a small animal until we heard what sounded like evil laughter coming from the air vent that leads to our attic. It began to make scratching sounds on the ceiling and it would whisper my name. This continued all night until around four in the morning and then it would just stop. I went through this every night for about five days and in the meantime my husband had gone up into the attic to inspect for animals or birds or any kinds of hole that something could get inside but he found nothing.

Then after the fifth night it got worse. I fell asleep that night and I was happy to have not heard a peep when I got awakened by something sitting on my chest and choking me. I couldn't scream for help and I was sure I was going to die. I could smell this thing and feel its skin on mine. It smelled like something does when it is dead and

has been lying in the summer heat for a few days. When I realised how strong it was I began to realise that I had no chance of getting it off me and so desperately I began thinking about Jesus and I got an image in my head of Him on the cross. At that very moment the thing let go of me for a moment and had a look of pure horror. It began to move backward like someone had just pressed the rewind button on a movie. It went back all the way to my bedroom door and then just stood there for what seemed like twenty minutes staring at me with a look on its face that was indescribable. It looked just like it had every time I had seen it but this time it was completely naked and had no form of anatomy and its skin looked to be burned all over. At this point I was able to move again and gathered up all my courage and quickly sat up and turned for the lamp beside my bed. When I looked back it was gone but there was a black spot on the floor where it had been. I got up and as I looked closer I realised it was completely burned and still very hot to the touch on the area where it had stood.

I ran over to my husband and he woke up easily which made me angry how he could not have heard or felt anything at all. I showed him the carpet and he looked at me and said, 'Oh my God Jennifer, what happened to your neck?' Now before he had said anything I hadn't even noticed any burning or pain at all but as I looked in the mirror I was horrified and I just could not believe how I had not noticed it before. There were deep burns on either side of my neck and were beginning to become painful. Now I'm not sure if it was in my mind since I was seeing it for the first time but I became uncontrollable and was shaking with fear. The next day I went to a local clinic in town and the doctor said it was third degree burns and asked me how in the world had I manage to get burned on the neck in such a pattern that looked a lot like hand prints to him. I had nothing to say and I sure as hell was not gone tell him the truth[cxcii].

It is a pity she never penned a second follow-up. It would be useful to know how her relations with the little people continued, and whether they ever moved house. One wonders, too, what was the relationship between the thing which attached her and the "shy" elves. Were they different in kind, or different in morality, just as there are good and evil individuals among humans?

Monsters

Here is a story told by 55 year old John, who declined to give his last name, about what happened to him in the summer of 1976 in Kentucky, when he was aged just 15. At that time, his mother had got herself another boyfriend, and the family had moved into an old building which he described as "creepy". One night, one of his brothers ran screaming from the upper bedroom claiming that something had pulled his bedclothes away, grabbed his hair, and shook him. He was told it was just a bad dream, but no-one slept upstairs that night. The next day, they sent their normally fearless dog up there, but he came down with his tail between his legs, and crouched down whimpering. Nevertheless, some nights later, John went to sleep in the upstairs bedroom, but pulled the blankets over his head when he heard growling and heavy breathing. The next day he sneaked one of his mother's cigarettes, and headed for the barn out the back.

> I walked in and began to feel creeped out but lit my smoke. I had my back against the inside so I was in the barn about 10 feet or so looking out the old barn doors. That's when I heard a voice that sounded a lot like the growling voice from the bedroom. It sounded like it was coming from the top of the barn in the corner. It was daylight so I could see very well. I swear this is true the voice said, 'So you think you're something don't you?' I felt the chills and the hair rise up on the back of my neck with my eyes watering I had to turn and look. I saw a winged large muscular figure of some kind of being. It blended in with the old reddish brown barn color. When we met eyes it left its perch with one leap and a flap. I began to run as fast as my 15 yr. old legs could make me. I could feel it getting closer to me as I got closer to the house for a second I thought it was going to pick me up, but I yelled for my mother and jumped on the back porch as the flying demon thing swooped up. I was still alive!! After I told the family what I experienced we decided to move and did so very fast. A few years later the house burned to the ground. I'm a 55 year old man and still can't shake the terror when I think about it[cxciii].

Again, one wonders how this relates to the winged humanoids of Illinois, mentioned in the last chapter, and which appear to be innocuous.

In the mid-1980s, 25-year-old Jeff Revis encountered something different, but absolutely terrifying, when he was working at a water plant in Tennessee. The plant was clean and well lit, but the basement, where the

pipes brought in water from the river, had an atmosphere which was decidedly menacing. Having begun the "graveyard shift", 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. by starting the machinery and doing the usual check, he retired to the chair behind the desk in the office and settled down to read. It was at 3 a.m. that he heard two latched closet doors suddenly crash down in the hall leading to the office. He returned to his desk, but could not relax because of a feeling that something hostile was approaching.

No door protected the office from the hall, and as he waited fearfully, a terrible air of hatred and evil seemed to settle like a fog. Down the hall, from the direction of the basement, drifted a black shape, floating six or twelve inches above the floor. It looked like a man dipped in tar, totally black, with arms, legs, and head, but no face. When it reached the open doorway, not more than eight feet from him, it halted, for some reason unable to cross the threshold. Instead, it leaned forwards and reached out its arms towards him. More terrifying, the arms got longer and longer with each lunge, but never quite touching him. At the same time, it let out what he described as a psychic scream, or waves of negative energy, hate and fear. After perhaps 30 seconds it turned its head to the left, and floated back to the basement. Mr. Revis was a quivering wreck, and at daybreak he requested a transfer.[cxciv]

In the following twenty years, he talked to several psychics, who told him that others had seen these black spirits, and that they were indeed dangerous. I can't argue with that.

Demonic Attacks

Here is an account by another Texan who preferred to remain anonymous.

> I was about three or four years old but my older brother confirmed my suspicions when I noticed small bruises or scratches that appeared over night. My bedroom door was usually locked but he said that whenever he went to check on the pups my door would open quietly and he would see a dark figure disappear into my room. By the time he was on his way back I was sitting up in bed crying for our mom and saying I was hurt. They would check my body and sure enough there were bruises and scratches covering my back. One was so deep that by the time it healed it was just a giant cross shaped scar on my back.

> It got worse when it was just me and my brother. I could be in the living room and recovering from that night's attack and I would be shoved onto the hardwood floor on my back. I looked up and there was a demon shaped figure leaning over me. I screamed for my brother and continued to point and scream until he got there. He looked up to where I was pointing and said there was nothing there. But there was something there and I could not stop crying.
>
> My parents hired a priest to come and cleanse the house and at the same time he baptized me. When he flipped me over to look at the marks on my back he poured holy water on it. I sat in his lap and was screaming for him to stop the burning. When it was over the air in our house felt lighter and I personally felt better. It is an memory I will probably carry to my death. I still have nightmares about the attacks and what I had seen[cxcv].

What sort of mundane explanation can be provided for this? Perhaps multiple nightmares with psychosomatic references (is there any evidence for such things?), cured by a ritual he was too young to understand? As with so many of these explanations, it requires results out of all proportion to the alleged stimuli. And what about the "dark figure" seen by his brother?

The second example in this section touches on a preacher-cum-healer, Kathryn Kuhlman (1907—1976). Personally, I have reservations about Miss Kuhlman as an individual. Her treatment of marriage and money, although unexceptional by the world's standards, was not, in my opinion, completely consistent with that of a Christian preacher. However, that is not the issue here. With respect to miraculous healings, anyone who refuses to believe in them has led a very restricted life. They have been reliably reported from every major branch of the the Church. Of course, you will read in the Wikipedia that a follow up of 23 of her alleged healing, were determined to be essentially either psychosomatic effects, or temporary reductions in symptoms. I am not inclined to dispute this. But 23 is a very small sample when looking for miracles. Nowhere is it written that supernatural healings have to be instantaneous and complete. In point of fact, one doctor, Dr. H. Richard Casdorf did thoroughly investigate the medical documentation of ten of her most spectacular healings, and left not the slightest doubt that they were genuinely miraculous.[cxcvi]

Be that as it may, in 1974 she had published an anthology, admittedly ghost-written, of first hand testimonies of her healings, some of which were really spectacular, to say the least. (A woman called Dorothy Otis was cured of scoliosis of the spine with a one inch shortening of the right leg, and her husband of advance emphysema—both of which are medically incurable conditions.) But nothing was more remarkable than the strange visitors who came for the daughter of Patricia Bradley.

Patricia was a beautiful woman with a far from beautiful life. Born at Kenova, West Virginia, she married at 15, only to discover that her husband was a drunkard and drug addict, who three times beat her so severely that she required hospitalisation. On the third time, she actually had plastic surgery to her nose and cheekbones. For money, she worked as a topless dancer in Dallas, and apparently also as a casual prostitute. Needless to say, her marriage collapsed. When a friend offered to kill her husband, she was desperate enough to agree. Fortunately or unfortunately, her husband found out and hired a hitman to murder *her*. Taking her daughter, Gina she fled, and eventually ended up working as a waitress in another town. About this time, she began to read the Bible. The upshot was that just before Christmas, at about 10 p.m., she walked into the Roman Catholic cathedral, wept and prayed for a whole two hours, and offered her life to Christ. A great inner peace came upon her, and she could feel a mysterious radiance in the the sanctuary.

At this point you might consider this a quite ordinary conversion story. True, she did travel a harrowing and roundabout way to get there, but the fact is that it is the flotsam and jetsam of this world, those whose earthly gods have failed them, who are most amenable to the Saviour's grace. You could fill a very large book with stories such as this. No, the really interesting bit is what happened next.

She had been rash enough to pray that, since she didn't have a son to give, as did God the Father, He could use her little girl for His glory. Be careful what you pray for! The following night, when she returned to the cathedral, there was sense of foreboding all around. Eight year old Gina looked back—and screamed. Two "spectres" were approaching.

The man had Mexican features, but his skin was bloodless gray, his face the mask of death. The woman, jerking along beside him, had pale white hair falling alongside colorless cheeks. Their eyes, unseeing, stared straight ahead. They were like walking corpses. (p 291)

The female reached out and touched Gina on the shoulder. Then they abruptly vanished. Grasping her daughter by the hand, Patricia ran screaming from the church. She ended up in a psychiatric ward while her daughter was send to the care of Patricia's sister, Faye. Nevertheless, Gina visited her every Saturday, and on the third visit informed her that those damned spectres had been meeting her every Friday after school to walk her home.

When Patricia was discharged in the first week of February, she discovered that now Gina was in hospital. Faye told her that, on the Friday a fortnight before, she had come down with a sore ankle. The next day her body was stiff and swollen. Now she was held in an isolation ward being fed by a drip, her body swollen, her joints stiff, the muscles on her neck like ropes. She drooled, she suffered from fever, and her eyes tended to roll back into their sockets. They had to keep her naked, for she screamed in pain if anything touched her skin. Rapidly deteriorating, she got to the stage where she swallowed her tongue and stopped breathing many times. She had lost control of her bowels and bladder. Her hair fell out, her legs were twisted, and she was in constant pain. Finally, about April or May, her treating doctor diagnosed a rare blood disease, periarteritis nodosa. Although by July she was permitted to leave, it was in a wheelchair, and everyone knew she was dying.

One might suspect that all this would put a bit of a strain on her mother's new found faith. However, when Kathryn Kuhlman turned up in their home state of West Virginia, mother and daughter attended her service. When the preacher commanded Satan to release his captives in the audience, somehow Patricia was convinced that Gina had been healed. And, in fact, she did improve over the next few weeks, and was even able to walk. When Miss Kuhlman returned in September, they again attended her service, and this time heard her say, "Someone is in the audience who is healed of a fatal blood disease." (How did she know?) Gina got up and walked out. That evening they poured all her pills down the sink. Within a week, her hair started growing back—this time curly, whereas before it was straight—and within a short time she was in perfect health.[cxcvii]

As I said, miraculous healings are a well-established phenomenon, but what about the *cause* of this disease.?What were those damned "spectres", and where the hell did they come from? Pray you will never meet them.

Unholy Things

The 1990 movie, *Ghost* ended with the murderers dying, and black shapes, presumably demons, dragging off their souls. But what if it is true (and not just for murderers)? How would you feel if you thought that the powers of evil were lurking at your death bed, waiting for you to take your final breath? It is not just blessed spirits and visions of paradise which the dying, and their attendants, see.

The first story comes from the same male nurse who told about the showers of rose petals. He admitted it was more a case of possession, but I am including it because it is too good to pass, and because it is example of the sort of thing which can happen when the curtain between the worlds opens. It occurred in 2004, when he was treating a man who had had a very hard life, and was now dying from multiple causes, including heart and renal failure. And he was very afraid of dying. Whenever his heart monitor beeped, he would go into a rage and scream, "Don't let me die! Don't let me die!"

Then, at 2 a.m. he went into ventricular tachycardia. When the alarm went off, the author was the second nurse to arrive in the room. The other nurse's face was completely white, because the patient was levitating in a seated position two inches above the bed. This time he had an evil smile on his face, and a look of pure evil in his eyes. He laughed, and said, "You stupid b*****s aren't going to let me die, will you?" Then he laughed again, and fell back onto the bed, and went into ventricular fibrillation. For twenty minutes the nurses worked to save his life, but in vain. Then, five minutes after they thought he was dead, and were busy cleaning up, he sat straight up in bed and said, "You let him die; too bad!" and began laughing. He then collapsed back on the bed, they heard the most agonized, blood curdling scream, followed by the words "Don't let me die" being whispered throughout the unit.

Nobody went anywhere by themselves. By morning the whispers of "Don't let me die" were gone. The night shift nurses had a prayer service in the break room before we left for home and then we all had nightmares for weeks[cxcviii].

Referring to the levitation, another nurse commented, "For that I would go get the charge nurse and walk out." This brought the reply:

I was the charge nurse. I was supposed to be putting on a brave front for the less experienced nurses. I am still freaked out from that night. I quit

working at that hospital not long after. Before I left I started to notice come changes throughout the unit. There was strange sounds. People's personalities were changing. I watched some of the quietest, shy nurses become very sexual or verbally abusive. We had one nurse who was a very devoted Christian woman. I had never heard a bad word about anyone or her even curse. She always smiled and was very polite. After that night, she would let out string of curse words and obscenities that I have never heard before. She had that same evil look in her eye as that patient did that night. That hospital needed a priest[cxcix].

Levitation is well documented in the case of Christian mystics. Voluminous sworn testimonies exist of saints such as John of Cupertino, Teresa of Ávila, and many, many others being seen to levitate, involuntarily and unwillingly, during their prayers[cc]. It appears to be a side effect of their altered state of consciousness. However, it is occasionally recorded in darker circumstances.

For instance, a New York psychiatrist, Dr. Richard E. Gallagher was called in as a consultant in the case of a middle aged woman seeking an exorcism. Having previously been involved in Satanism, she was regularly falling into trances during which a completely different, evil personality emerged. It would be easy to write her symptoms off as simply a dissociative disorder, except that, outside of her trance states, she exhibited extrasensory perception and involuntary psychokinesis ie poltergeist phenomena. Significantly, during the exorcism, she actually levitated half a foot in the air for about 30 minutes[cci]. Again, in 2014 a family reportedly suffered a whole series of demonic attacks in their home at Gary, Indiana. A twelve year old girl was said to have levitated off her bed while unconscious. Admittedly, no outsiders were present. However, when a social worker and nurse were present, her nine year old brother walked backwards up the wall and ceiling.[ccii]

But we have digressed. Let us consider the apparitions. A New Zealander called Jordan admitted that, when he was 18 back in 1994, he was "a tad stupid", and the stupidest thing he ever did was bonnet surfing ie squatting on the bonnet of a friend's car while it was being driven. Not unexpectedly (except to him and his friend) he ended up in a pool of blood and tremendous pain, surrounded by police and paramedics. It was then that he saw, approaching from the end of the street, a figure in a black cloak. When he kept swearing at it to keep its distance, the paramedics thought he

was “losing it” and pumped him full of morphine. A week later, in the intensive care unit of the local hospital, he suddenly awoke with a jerk to see the same black figure standing near the window. Suddenly, the figure raced across the room and out of the door, and as it passed, Jordan felt as if his spirit had been pulled out of him. The next day, a nurse told him that one of her patients across the corridor had died that night.[cciii]

Of course, it is easy to write such a thing off as an hallucination, but harder when a third party is a witness. For example, when Gillian Cotton was a pupil nurse at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital in London, she turned the corner into a ward at a quarter to three one morning, and saw a figure standing at the foot of the bed of a patient expected to die. Strictly speaking, “standing” is an inappropriate term, because it appeared to have no feet, and seemed to be floating. It wore a long black cape and a big black hat. She stayed out of sight for a few seconds, and when she stepped forward, the figure had disappeared, although there was nowhere it could have gone. And the patient was dead.[cciv]

You may also remember from the section on “Haunted Hospitals” in Chapter 7, how staff had frequently seen a black figure moving from room to room.

One nurse was told by a colleague how she had been assigned a patient dying of cancer. At one point the patient cried out, “Don’t let them take me!” Who? asked the nurse. He pointed into the air and told her it was “that black thing there.” He died within minutes.[ccv]

In reply to this another nurse told of a colleague’s experience. When she went to take a female patient’s vital signs, the patient was lifted a few inches off the bed, and there was a black shadow covering the room which departed once the patient died, and a very cold draft followed[ccvi]. So here we have another incident of levitation. The nurse suggested that you can tell whether the deceased has gone to heaven, or been claimed by the Devil. Just as in *Ghost*.

(And in case you are wondering whether she was right, you might consider what happened to Prof. Howard Storm. In 1985, when he suffered a perforated stomach ulcer in Paris, resulting a near death experience in which he was attacked by demons. Although an atheist, he found he could keep them at bay by praying the Lord’s Prayer—which makes you wonder what would have happened if he hadn’t.)[ccvii]

Admittedly, these last two were second hand. However the same cannot be said for the following account by a nurse called Mary Ann.

> One night I was caring for a dying male patient. He was scared and I spent quite some time with him, trying to calm and reassure him. Eventually he calmed and I left the bedside and went over to the nurses station which was about 15 feet away. As I sat down I glanced over to him and there was a black shape standing over the bed, looking down at the patient. I was terrified, and am sure it was something evil[ccviii].

Finally, we have the account of a South African nurse working in California.

There was a patient who was terminally ill with liver cancer in a private room. I was working days but the night shift people said they hated going into the room because something would blow on the back of their necks and shadows would move where shadows shouldn't be. The man was a Christian, as was his wife and his wife said she saw this black presence descend above him and his breathing would become laboured. She asked myself and a friend to pray for her which we gladly did being Christians ourselves. We anointed and blessed the room and prayed with the family and asked the Lord to seal the room. From that time on the room was filled with peace and love and the man breathed so much more easier. People had no more problems with going in there. This gentle little man eventually passed away, but it was in a place of peace and love[ccix].

CHAPTER 22

Agents of Light?

Some have entertained angels unawares.
Heb. 13:2

I wouldn't like to leave you with the horrors of the last chapter still in your mind, so we shall look on the bright side. In the 1947 movie, *The Bishop's Wife*, the angel Dudley, played by Cary Grant, says, in effect: you see strangers hurrying by all the time. Most of them are ordinary, flesh-and-blood people, but every so often one of them is an angel, going about his mission. Of course, this was fiction, but it would be nice to think it were true, wouldn't it? If so, all I can say is that they are very much more circumspect in their undercover operations. Unlike Patricia Bradley's spectres, one does not see them materialise or dematerialise. Nevertheless, some hints can be found, if you look for them.

Mickey Rooney (1920—2014), one of the last survivors of the Golden Age of Hollywood, came to Christ late in life. And he always insisted that one impetus for his conversion was a visit by an incognito angel. He was having breakfast at a restaurant at Lake Tahoe, at a table of nine, but still feeling lonely and depressed, when he was approached by a young man in the uniform of a busboy, or waiter's assistant. Of a very striking appearance, in a white uniform, and blessed with a mass of golden hair, he asked him if he were Mickey Rooney. Mickey replied in the affirmative, thinking there may be a telephone call for him, but instead the busboy said to him: "Jesus Christ loves you very much, and He knows what you are going through." Then he left. The flabbergasted Mr. Rooney talked to the other guests at the table, but no-one had seen him. He went to the hostess, but she insisted they had no such person on their staff. She allowed him to look in the kitchen, and in all the other likely places, but he was nowhere to be found.

It is just possible, of course, that a fan who was both religious and strikingly good looking decided to deliver such a message to Mickey, and somehow evaded all notice from everybody else. It is an unusual

combination of events, but not fantastic. However, Mickey then went up to his hotel room, and there was the same busboy on his balcony. When he opened the windows to the balcony, the busboy told him, “You looked for me; that was what I wanted.” The star never explained what the busboy did after that, or where or how he left, but he was convinced he was an angel[ccx].

I am always reticent to cite Brad and Sherry Steiger, because they hardly ever provide their sources. However, the following appears to have come direct from the chief character, whose words are quoted extensively. In 1959 and fresh out of seminary, Pastor A. T. Vermedahl imagined himself as being in charge of a large, big city congregation. Instead, just a month before Christmas, he found himself posted to a little town in Wyoming where four or five blocks were classed as the main street. Instead of having the humility to accept the task allotted to him, he practically shouted to his parents over the telephone, “I keep asking why I was sent to the godforsaken place!” Only then did he notice that behind him was the church secretary, who pointed out, testily, that they didn’t think God had forsaken them.

At least, however, he could arrange something special in the music line for Christmas. His hope was an oratorio such as Handel’s *Messiah* or, if that were not possible, a medley of good Christmas hymns. But when he heard the lack of talent among the yokels in the choir, his heart sank. Come the big night: the evening service on Christmas Eve, and he read out St. Luke’s account of the birth of Jesus, and the visitation of the angels to the shepherds. At that very moment, the door opened, and in walked a beautiful woman with reddish blond hair and, clad in a snow white gown, swept down the aisle to the front of the choir. Without any musical accompaniment, she gave the most exquisite rendition of “He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd” from the *Messiah.* The song ended, she swept back down the aisle. The four ushers at the door affirmed that no vehicle was awaiting her; she simply disappeared into the darkness. Before the service was even over, the congregation was whispering that they had been visited by an angel.[ccxi]

If not, then we have to replace a supernatural mystery with a human mystery. Who was she? And what made her appear in that obscure hamlet at that exact opportune moment? She had never been invited, no-one knew her

and, despite the fact that Pastor Vermedahl served that parish for the next fifteen years, no-one ever saw her again.

Even less likely is a mundane explanation for the following story. Although it does not, strictly speaking, deal with an angel, it would certainly come under the heading of an agent of light. An American woman called Sandy told how, in 1999, she had been having problems with her first pregnancy, which was now in its ninth month. On 1st August, her sister was staying with her, because her husband was temporarily out of town. At 12.49 a.m. she suddenly woke up with a cold feeling on her arm, and saw an old man, dressed in old clothes with suspenders, sitting on the edge of the bed, looking down at her.

Naturally, she screamed. Her sister rushed in and told her she had had a bad dream. But as soon as the sister had gone, and the light was turned off, the old man was back. This time, he told her that she would begin a hard labour on 9 August, but her daughter would not be born until the 10th. Nevertheless, he informed her that everything would turn out for the best. Then he kissed her belly and asked her to tell her grandmother that he loved her.

When she visited her grandmother the next day, the latter produced an old photo of the same man. It was *her* father ie Sandy's great-grandfather, who had died before she was born. And, needless to say, his prediction came true to the letter. A photo of the great-grandfather was hung in the family's home, and some time later, this same daughter came and told her how he had visited her in the night, and held her hand until she went back to sleep. But before she did so, he gave her a prediction: her mother would soon leave her for a few days, but there was nothing to worry about, because he would be with her (Sandy) if she needed him. Sure enough, a week later, she went into hospital for major surgery, which turned out successful.[ccxii]

One could cite similar cases, but they merge into the categories of visions or clairvoyance, rather than apparitions.

Finally, I have already mentioned Dr. Melvin Morse, and his research into the near death experiences of children, which he discovered were much the same as those of adults, despite the children's cultural naïvety. Due to this reputation, he was eventually approached by a woman, whose name he

preferred not to disclose, wishing to describe her own experience, and seeking reassurance about her mental state.

Twenty years previously, as a child (I suspect a late teenager) she almost died as a result of anaphylactic shock induced by an allergic reaction to antibiotics. While the doctors struggled to revive her, she underwent a typical near death experience: she came out of her body, passed through the tunnel to a paradise of light, and into the presence of a light she took for God. Not only that, but she encountered a ministering angel who called herself Sarah. This itself was not atypical; Dr. Morse encountered many children who, in the midst of a near death experience, reported beings who were blond or "all white" escorting them on the Other Side.

The difference in this case was that, when the woman was resuscitated, Sarah came back with her. She discovered that, if she every needed help in any of her personal problems, she need only retreat to a quiet place and call upon Sarah, who would appear to provide advice. Although it is not specifically stated, the implication was that the angel was visible to her. But she naturally assumed she was invisible to others.

Then, not long before her visit to Dr. Morse, she had been having a lot of trouble with her teenage son. So, while waiting up late for him to arrive home, she called on Sarah, and spent a half hour discussing with her the problems of bringing up rebellious teens. What she didn't know was that her son had arrived home half way through the conversation, and had peeked around the corner to watch them. The next morning he asked her, "Mom, who was that woman you were talking to last night? She seemed real nice."[ccxiii]

What are we to make of this? If no third party had been a witness, I would have no hesitation in labelling Sarah a secondary personality of the woman, an example of dissociation. Even then, it would be remarkable. I once met a saintly lady with the appropriate name of Miss Toogood, whose conscience really was a "still, small voice" inside her head. We also have the famous example of Socrates, whose internal voice would warn him of danger, or when he was about to make a bad decision. In his view, it was his *daemon*, a term which, in those days, meant "tutelary spirit" rather than evil spirit. We would see it as an externalisation of his conscience and prudence. But, as far as I know, he never actually saw it. Without the influence of drugs or sleep deprivation, visual hallucinations are very rare, even among

the genuinely psychotic.

But how was it that her son saw the apparition? Is this a case whereby his mother's unconscious secondary personality turned into a psychic manifestation? Was Sarah a tulpa? If so, it would be quite remarkable. Tulpas don't just happen; they are only the result of intense concentration and mental exercises.

No, Dr. Morse's informant met her on the Other Side. And four and a half decades of research have failed to uncover a naturalistic explanation for near death experiences. Sarah, I am sure, was real. The woman was blessed in being able to consciously interact with her attendant angel, but I strongly expect that we all have one.

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Other Books by the Author

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The Stranger from the Stars. A science fiction novel about a group of hikers who rescue an injured alien from a crashed flying saucer. Having followed the UFO scene for more than 50 years, I have ensured that the story is "realistic", in that all the phenomena described have been reported many times in the literature.

Savages and Saints by Leon and Theophila Philippi—but ghost written by yours truly. This is the story of my parents-in-law: a farm boy from Nebraska, and a pastor's daughter from the Eyre Peninsula of South Australia, who were thrown together under unusual circumstances, married after a whirlwind courtship, and set out for New Guinea as missionaries. The sort of experiences they went through are beyond the imagination of the present generation.

Trials of a Tourist. I've been an international tourist for most of my adult life, visiting remote places even millionaires haven't seen. So now I have written a humorous account of the quirky things I have experienced, as well as the "plot against tourists", by which the world conspires to make travelling as inconvenient as possible.

Bunyips and Bigfoots. A comprehensive, fully documented guide to the mystery animals of Australia: bunyips, sea serpents, mainland thylacines, alien big cats, yowies, and others. Originally published in 1996, it has now been republished as a second edition, up-dated with the information which has become available in during the last 25 years.

The Truth About Bunyips. Every Australian has heard about bunyips, but no-one knows what they are supposed to look like. Based on a huge number of recently digitalised old documents and newspapers, this short book should be the definitive work on the subject.

Australian Sea Serpents. Sea serpents really exist, and have been visiting Australian shores for a long time. I have now trawled through dozens to digitalised newspapers to produce what I expect will also become the definitive work on the subject. More than half of the case histories are new—that is to say, they have never been published in book form by other researchers.

Forgotten Sea Serpents. This is an adjunct to the above: a large collection of reports of sea serpents outside of Australia which have, apparently, been missed by other researchers. The book should be welcomed by cryptozoologists looking to complete their documentation on the subject.

Forgotten Bigfoots Around the World. Here I provide translations of articles and reports in little known foreign language journals about mystery apes on five continents.

The Repat Racket. For 30 years I worked for the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs. Here I report the scandal of legislation which has become a gravy train for false claims while acting negatively on those who have genuinely been injured or traumatised by war.

[1] See “Other books by the author” at the end of this volume.

[2] A paraphrase of Psalm 104:2, although it referred specifically to God, rather than His saints.

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[vii] *PotL1* pp 101-2

[viii] *PotL1* pp 102-3

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[x] *PotL1* pp 566-7

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[xiv] Crowe, pp 157-8

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https://inexplicata.blogspot.com/2016/08/diminutive-ufo-occupants-or-elementals.html

[cxxix] I have taken this summary from a Spanish language website https://www.taringa.net/+info/pequenas-entitades-en-argentina-ii-_h5f1c.

Endnotes [132] to [142] are taken from this article.

My own translation can be found at

https://malcolmsanomalies.blogspot.com/2017/08/a-plague-of-goblins-in-argentina.html

[cxxx] Latin *fata* "a fate". By means of the regular sound changes in its daughter languages, this becomes *hada* in Spanish, and *fé* in French, whence Old French *faerie*, "fairyland".

[cxxxi] But if you want to read about it, you can use Google translator on the following newspaper article:

Cristian Alarcón, 'Un pueblo asustado por "apariciones". Duendes en Catamarca.' *Pagina 12* [Page 12] 12 July 2000, p.17

https://www.pagina12.com.ar/2000/00-07/00-07-12/pag17.html

[cxxxii] Parente, Patricio: De luces y criaturas: I. los duendes; *Gaceta OVNI* and personal communication [ref. 129]

[cxxxiii] El Petiso, atacó a un joven cazador, *El Tribuno* (Salta) 21 February 2002, p.23

[cxxxiv] De platos voladores, enanos orejudos, marcianos chupatanques y vacas mutiladas, *La Reforma* (General Pico, La Pampa), 31 May 2002, p.4

[cxxxv] Testigo dice haber estado con el enano orejudo, *La Reforma* (General Pico, La Pampa), 4 June 2002, p.4

[cxxxvi] Todos hablan del enano verde, *La Arena* (Santa Rosa, La Pampa), 6 June 2002, p. 20

[cxxxvii] Misterioso enano verde, ahora lo vieron en Ataliva Roca, *La Arena* (Santa Rosa, La Pampa), 12 June 2002, p. 20.

En Ataliva Roca vieron a un extraño ser, *La Reforma* (General Pico, La Pampa), 15 June 2002, p.4

[cxxxviii] La culpa es del Cacique Yancay, *La Reforma* (General Pico, La Pampa), 15 June 2002, p. 4

[cxxxix] Dicen que vieron al enano verde, *La Arena* (Santa Rosa, La Pampa), 17 June 2002, pg. 20

[cxl] Cuatro niñas de Castex dijeron que vieron al enanito verde, *El Diario* (Santa Rosa, La Pampa), 21 June 2002, p. 2

[cxli] Dos jóvenes dicen haber observado a un enano orejudo, *La Reforma* (General Pico, La Pampa), 25 June 2002, pp. 1, 12

[cxlii] *El Territorio* (Posadas, Misiones), 26 September 2002, and personal communication [ref. 129]

Chapter 16

[cxliii] Simon Young (2016), 'Wollaton Park gnomes: tape transcript', https://www.academia.edu/30103864/Wollaton_Park_Gnomes_Tape_Transcript

This agrees with the summary by Johnson (2014), pp 245-8. She was sent a copy of the tape by the headmaster, and she also provided the names of the children.

[cxliv] Fairy Census, [103C]

[cxlv] Fairy Census, [102C]

[cxlvi] Fairy Census, [104C]

[cxlvii] Johnson (2104), pp 248-250

[cxlviii] Janet Bord (1997), *Fairies, real encounters with little people*, Carroll and Graf, pp 75-76 of the 1998 Dell edition.

[cxlix] "Up, Up, and Away", written by Jimmy Webb, sung by 5th Dimension.

[cl] Fairy Census [80]

[cli] Gordon Creighton, 1970: 'A weird case from the past', *Flying Saucer Review* 16(4), p30, quoted in *Extraordinary Encounters* by Jerome Clark (2000), and in Bord [ref. 148]

[clii] Jayne Kamal (2002), 'Little people',

http://www.castleofspirits.com/ghoststories/stories02/December2002_22.html

She also told the same story to *Fortean Times* under the assumed name, Whitcamel (2003), 'Lots of little people', *IHTM* vol. 4, pp 37-38

[cliii] Alan Baker: *Encyclopaedia of Alien Encounters*, pp 37-38, quoted in http://www.thinkaboutitdocs.com/the-little-people-of-malaysia/ .

[cliv] These articles can be read on Chuen Ling Lee (2005), 'Aliens and UFOs—frontpage news of the Straits Times?'

http://lingthemerciless.blogspot.com/2005/11/aliens-and-ufos-frontpage-news-of.html. Since the paper was based in Singapore, and the events took place in Malaya, the dispatches were dated the day before publication, something to remember when reading the words, "yesterday" and "today".

[clv] Ahmad Jamaludin (1983), 'A wave of small humanoids in Malaysia in 1970', *FSR*, 28(5): pp 24-27

[clvi] Ahmad Jamaludin (1979), *MUFON UFO Journal*, No. 141, November 1979, copied at

http://www.ufoevidence.org/documents/doc1114.html

[clvii] Report in Malay language newspaper, *Berita Harian*, 15 May 1991, translated in

Ahmad Jamaluddin (1993), 'Yet once again—reports of "tiny alien entities" in Malaysia', *FSR* 38(4) p 23

[clviii] Nick Redfern (2018), 'Strange tales of the little people' https://mysteriousuniverse.org/2018/09/strange-tales-of-the-little-people/

Chapter 17

[clix] Eileen Morris (1980), 'The winged beings of Bluestone Walk', *FSR* 25(6): pp 24—27 (Nov—Dec 1979, published April 1980.

As the original report is hard to access, I have copied it verbatim as https://malcolmsanomalies.blogspot.com/2017/01/the-mince-pie-martians-original-account.html

Chapter 18

[clx] https://archive.org/details/comingoffairies00doylrich

[clxi] http://www.fairyist.com/fairy-investigation-society/

[clxii] Bord [ref. 97]

[clxiii] See "Fairy Census" in the Selection Bibliography.

[clxiv] Michael Swords (2019), 'A very modest analysis of half of the fairy census,' *FIR Newsletter* 10: 33-8

[clxv] Michael Swords (2020), 'Faery: is it now? Has it ever been?', *FIR Newsletter* 12: 17-24

[clxvi] https://thebiggeststudy.blogspot.com/

Chapter 20

[clxvii] 'Fishy lover for Shelley', *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane) 2 June 1991, but also in a various newspapers around the world.

[clxviii] 'North Dakota family reports problems with cat-faced creatures,' *MUFON UFO Journal* no. 518 (June 2011) p 15. I copied it verbatim on https://malcolmsanomalies.blogspot.com/2013/04/haunted-but-not-by-ghosts.html

[clxix] Michael D. Swords (2003), 'Timmermania: a step too far into the Timmerman files?' *International UFO Reporter* 27(4): 8-9, 26 (This was the now defunct journal of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies.) Also:

Michael D. Swords (2005), *Grassroots UFOs*, Anomalist Books, p 190

[clxx] Sean (2004), 'The tentacle', *IHTM* vol. 4, pp 149-150

[clxxi] https://www.iusedtobelieve.com/at_home/under_my_bed/monsters/

[clxxii] Katharine Briggs (1976), *A Dictionary of Fairies*, Allen Lane, and later Penguin. Published in the U.S. as *An Encyclopedia of Fairies*, https://archive.org/details/BriggsKatharineMaryAnEncyclopediaOfFairies

[clxxiii] Janet and Colin Bord (1980), *Alien Animals. A worldwide investigation.* Granada (Book Club edition, 1981)

[clxxiv] Michael Swords (2020), 'Are black fairy dogs from Faery?' Parts 1-3

https://thebiggeststudy.blogspot.com/2020/05/are-black-fairy-dogs-from-faery-part-1.html
https://thebiggeststudy.blogspot.com/2020/05/are-black-fairy-dogs-from-faery-part-2.html

https://thebiggeststudy.blogspot.com/2020/05/is-black-fairy-dog-from-faery-part-3.html

[clxxv] G. E. Thompson (2000), 'Meeting black shuck', *IHTM* vol. 2, pp 101-2

[clxxvi] JD (2004), 'Black dog in a blackberry bush' *IHTM* vol. 4, pp 63-65

[clxxvii] Anon (2004), 'Dog from nowhere", *IHTM* vol. 4, pp 67-68

[clxxviii] Don Worley (1972), 'The winged lady in black,' *FSR Case Histories*, supplement 10 (June 1972), pp 14-16, cited in Janet and Colin Bord [ref. 173], p 131

[clxxix] Colby Pope (2003), 'The Caddington birdman', *IHTM* vol. 1, p 88

[clxxx] Elaine Towns (2008), 'Rocketman', *IHTM* vol. 2, pp 50-52

[clxxxi] Lon Strickland (2018), 'Flying red-eyed 'gargoyle' suddenly vanishes in Rockford, Illinois.'

https://www.phantomsandmonsters.com/2018/11/flying-red-eyed-gargoyle-suddenly.html

[clxxxii] Lon Strickland (2018), 'Another 'black winged humanoid' observed near Rockford, Illinois.

https://www.phantomsandmonsters.com/2018/11/another-black-winged-humanoid-observed.html

[clxxxiii] Lon Strickland (2018), '"Winged humanoid"—2017 report—Rockford, Illinois'

https://www.phantomsandmonsters.com/2018/11/winged-humanoid-2017-report-rockford.html

[clxxxiv] For the links, see https://www.phantomsandmonsters.com/p/chicago-phantom-sightings-2011-2017.html

[clxxxv] 'Winged humanoid sighting by pilot at O'Hare International Airport', https://ufoclearinghouse.wordpress.com/2020/06/07/winged-humanoid-sighting-by-pilot-at-ohare-international-airport/

[clxxxvi] Anon (2001), 'Dog-heads in Manchester' *IHTM* vol 5, p 96

[clxxxvii] Jandzmom (2005), 'Dog-headed date from hell', *IHTM* vol 5, pp 103-104

Chapter 21

[clxxxviii] Her 1984 account can be found on the *Fortean Times* Message Board at https://forums.forteana.org/index.php?threads/finehair-again6s-gnomes-caution-may-be-tripe.35297/#post-446533. It was reprinted in *IHTM* vol. 4, pp 42-45, and in the Fairy Census [476C].

[clxxxix] The account she sent to me in 2015 can be found at https://malcolmsanomalies.blogspot.com/2015/08/attempted-abduction-by-gnomes.html

[cxc] Anonymous (2011), 'Shadow man and little shadow people', http://www.castleofspirits.com/ghoststories/stories11/October2011_12.html

[cxci] Anonymous (2010), 'The long dirt road', http://www.castleofspirits.com/ghoststories/stories10/April2010_7.html

[cxcii] Jennifer Lozano (2010), 'The long dirt road—another encounter'. http://www.castleofspirits.com/ghoststories/stories10/December2010_7.html

[cxciii] John (2017), 'The barn spirit', http://www.castleofspirits.com/ghoststories/stories17/October2017_4.html

[cxciv] Jeff Revis (2005), 'Water plant ghost', *IHTM* vol. 2, pp 67-70

[cxcv] Anonymous (2017), 'Demonic scars', http://www.castleofspirits.com/ghoststories/stories17/June2017_5.html

[cxcvi] H. Richard Casdorph (1976), *The Miracles*, Logos International. A brief summary of them can be found at https://charismactivism.com/2012/11/03/eleven-medically-verified-healings/

[cxcvii] Patricia Bradley, 'Yet in Love He Sought Me', chapter 20, pp 287-304 in *Nothing Is Impossible With God,* by Kathryn Kuhlman (Spire Books, 1976)

[cxcviii] Nursing Ghost Stories, p 3 ('schroeders_piano', June 15, 2005)

[cxcix] Nursing Ghost Stories, p 4 ('schroeders_piano', June 19, 2005)

[cc] Herbert Thurston (1952), *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism*, Henry Regnery, Chicago. https://archive.org/details/in.gov.ignca.7290

[cci] Richard H. Gallagher (2008), 'Among the many counterfeits, a case of demonic possession',
https://www.sott.net/article/151935-Among-the-Many-Counterfeits-a-Case-of-Demonic-Possession

[ccii] Marisa Kwiatkowski, 'The exorcisms of Layota Ammons', *Indy Star* 25 Jan. 2014
https://www.indystar.com/story/news/2014/01/25/the-disposession-of-latoya-ammons/4892553/

[cciii] Jordan (2006), 'My NDE'
http://www.castleofspirits.com/ghoststories/stories06/May2006_18.html
Note: although he called it an NDE or "near death experience", he was using it in the sense of narrowly escaping death. It is clear that he was both alive and conscious throughout the experience.

[cciv] Rae-Ellis (1990) p 176

[ccv] Nursing Ghost Stories, p1 ("Chad_KY_SRNA" at June 13, 2005) This is the very first entry on the site.

[ccvi] Nursing Ghost Stories, p 3 ("coot" at June 18, 2005, in response to "Chad_KY_SRNA")

[ccvii] Wilson (1997), pp 137-149. His personal testimony can be found online at http://thendestories.uk/NDE_story0017.html.

[ccviii] Nursing Ghost Stories, p 1 ("MaryAnn_RN" at June 13, 2005)

[ccix] Nursing Ghost Stories, p 5 ("gms1976" at June 20, 2005)

Chapter 22

[ccx] For example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FY2wifHpK6I

[ccxi] Brad Steiger and Sherry Hansen Steiger (2001), *Christmas Miracles. Inspirational stories of true holiday magic*, Adams Media Corporation, pp 1-6

[ccxii] Sandy (2006), 'My daughter's guardian angel',

http://www.castleofspirits.com/ghoststories/stories06/February2006_19.html

[ccxiii] Morse, pp 151-2 of the Bantam edition.